

WALKS IN PARIS

GEORGES CAIN

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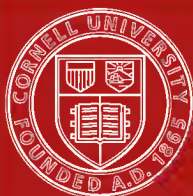
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WALKS IN PARIS



THE RUE FÉROU,—NEAR SAINT-SULPICE

WALKS IN PARIS

BY

GEORGES CAIN

CURATOR OF THE "MUSÉE CARNAVALET"

TRANSLATED BY

ALFRED ALLINSON, M.A.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN COLOUR BY

MAXWELL ARMFIELD

AND 118 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLANS

NEW YORK

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Prof. Henry
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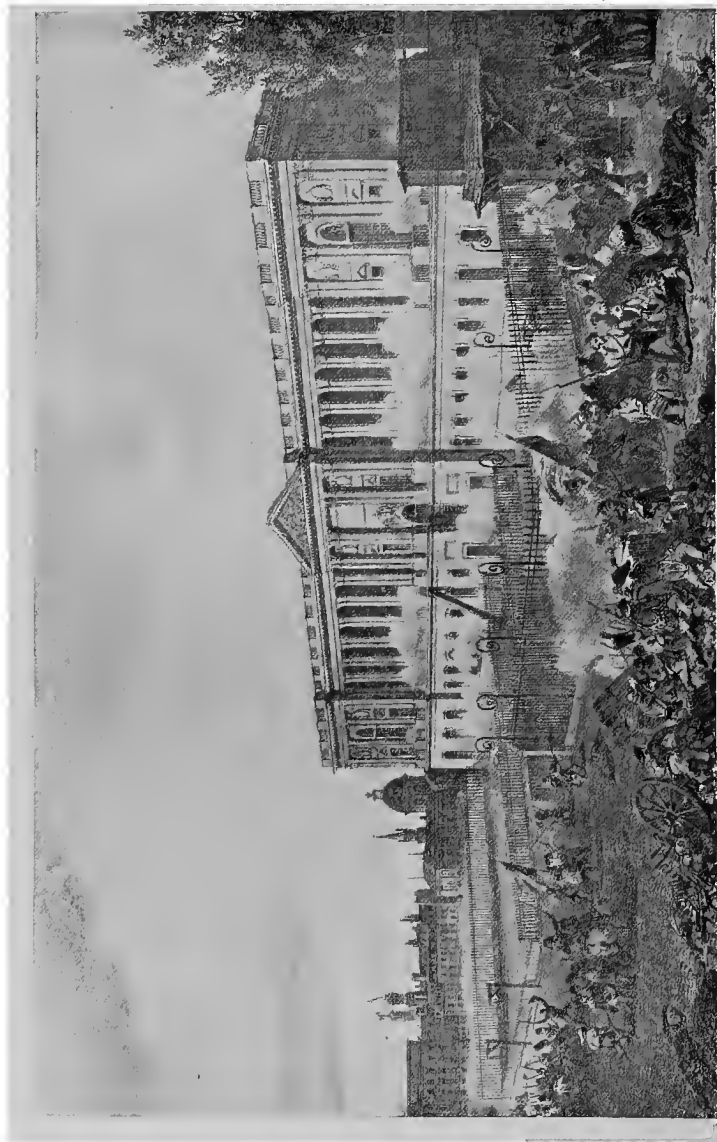
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Taking of the *Louvre* in 1830

WALKS IN PARIS

THE LEFT BANK

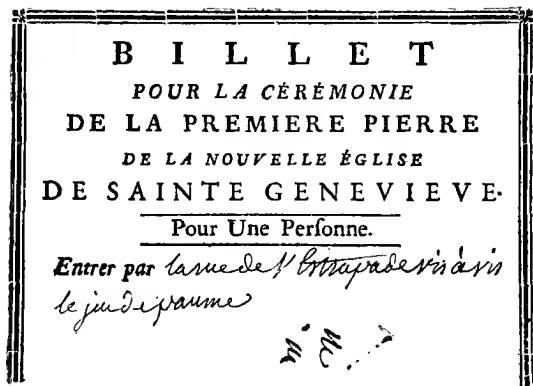
ROUND ABOUT THE PANTHÉON

ONE of the greatest griefs of our Parisiennes has always been not to know Paris. Hence a hundred pretty regrets and dainty lamentations—"Ah! how I should love to see the *Bièvre*. . . . There are still, it appears, amazingly fine old houses in the *Marais*? . . . Now, what *is* the *Rue Geoffroy l'Asnier* like? . . . and the *Hôtel Scipion*? Really it breaks my heart to be so ignorant; but how can I help it—what with paying calls and seeing dressmakers and milliners, what with Ritz and Rumpel . . . and then *my afternoon*?" The result is generally a firm resolve, the first spring morning come, to mount one of Cook's brakes and visit the lions of Paris like any ordinary tourist.

I was thinking of all these charming creatures and their unsatisfied curiosity one warm April day when Paris lay softly bathed in a sort of blue-grey haze, as I watched a band of English visitors making ready to invade the Panthéon. The showman who acted as guide hurriedly muttered a few explanatory words—"Soufflot . . . 1791 . . . Voltaire . . . Marat . . . Victor Hugo" . . ., then the dishevelled band plunged into the solemn

silence of the interior. I could not help thinking how amusing it would be to take the fellow's place, where he stood stringing together commonplaces, and do the honours properly and pleasantly of these old quarters of the city, so full of memories, to my fascinating Parisian friends who complained so feelingly of knowing nothing of the history of the beautiful city of which they are the greatest charm!

Carefully avoiding the too hackneyed legend of the Panthéon—Clovis, St. Geneviève, the Norman invasion,



Ticket of Admission to the Ceremony of Laying the First Stone of the
New Church of *Sainte-Geneviève*

the ruined Abbey, burnt down and again rebuilt by the worshippers of the Saint, the monks conspiring for the *Ligue*,—one would tell them in three words about Louis XV. lying sick unto death at Metz, and vowing in his terror to re-edify the ancient church dedicated to the Patron Saint of Paris, then in 1755 assigning to the works of reconstruction a portion of the money coming from the three lotteries that were drawn month by month.

Soufflot's plans are adopted, the hill-top is covered with scaffolding, and the Parisians wax enthusiastic over the proud and monumental edifice that alters the ancient skyline of their city. But presently settlements occur and cracks open, and admiration is exchanged for foolish panic. Sinister rumours circulate—"The building is going to collapse, carrying with it in its ruin the whole of the old quarter of the Sorbonne!" Quite needless all this alarm; the walls are propped, cavities are filled in, and Paris breathes again. But the unfortunate Soufflot is broken-hearted and dies of vexation in 1781, leaving his great work still unfinished. This does not prevent the Constituent Assembly from secularising the church, and in 1791 reconsecrating it to the cult of the great men of France. "This Basilica," writes Camille Desmoulins, "is destined to unite all mankind in the Religion of Humanity!"

The decree was passed immediately after the death of Mirabeau, and on 4th April Paris gave the great Tribune a superb funeral.¹ Four hundred thousand people attended, and on this occasion were used for the first time two novel instruments, the trombone and the tomtom. "Their notes, so loud and staccato, seemed to tear the

¹ "Never were obsequies more impressive. All Paris was afoot, and if all its inhabitants did not follow the funeral of the illustrious orator, it was because, in order to see it go by, it was needful not to take part in it, though indeed numbers of people, after watching it file by, themselves joined the endless procession to the tomb. The Constituent Assembly in a body, all the authorities and functionaries, the democratic societies, the great officials of the Court, the National Guard and thousands of citizens, all marched confounded in one common sorrow, for all had cherished high hopes of this marvellous man for whom the Panthéon seemed the only worthy burial place."—*Mémoires du Baron Thiébault*, vol. i., pp. 278, 279.

entrails and break the hearts of those who heard them," says a contemporary writer.¹ By the light of funeral torches, amid groans and lamentations, the vast cortège reached the "French Panthéon"—such was the new name of the edifice. Mirabeau was the first of all the great men interred there, yet his lease was but a short one. Less than three years afterwards, acting on a report by Joseph Chénier, the Convention, "deeming that there is no great man without virtue, decrees that the body of Mirabeau shall be removed from the Panthéon and Marat's transferred there". The sentence was carried out pitilessly and coldly during the night, and what remains of Mirabeau lies in some obscure corner of the tragic cemetery of Clamart, where the bodies of those who perished in the September massacres were tossed pell-mell.

Marat, his virtuous supplanter, had his turn of glorification. David himself designed the triumphal car which bore his friend's corpse to the Panthéon. The body was so terribly decomposed that the face had to be made presentable with paint and rouge. For it was the actual body of the popular Tribune which Paris saw carried by, covered with blood-stained linen, an arm "holding an iron pen," hanging outside the coffin. A howling crowd followed, weeping the death of their "divine hero". Three months more and the aforesaid Marat was "depantheonised" in his turn, and thrown probably into the *fosse commune* in the little cemetery attached to *Saint-Étienne-du-Mont*.

Voltaire and Rousseau likewise received the honours of posthumous triumph. The body of Voltaire, brought to Paris from the Abbey of Scellières, passed the night of 11th

¹ *Mémoires du Baron Thiébault*, vol. i., p. 279.

July, 1791, on the spot where the demolished Bastille had stood.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, a car of monumental proportions, drawn by twelve horses, moved off for the Panthéon. It was surmounted by a sarcophagus of Oriental granite, bearing a figure of Voltaire in a half-reclining posture as if asleep. He was clad in a purple robe, and a young girl was laying a crown of golden stars about his brow. All Paris lined the streets as the procession went by. The route comprised the *Boulevards*, the *Rue Royale*, the *Place Louis XV.*, the *Quais* and then up the *Rue Saint-Jacques*. The first halt was made in front of the *Opéra* (on the site of the present theatre of the *Porte-Saint-Martin*), where hymns were chanted ; the second on the *Quai des Théatins* (now the *Quai Voltaire*), in front of the house of M. de Villette, where the great man died.

There a band of fifty young girls, wearing classical costumes designed by David, surrounded the funeral car, over which fluttered the torn flag of the Bastille ; they were joined presently by the widow and daughters of the unhappy Calas and the artistes of the Comédie Française, in theatrical dress. Children walked in front of the cortège, strewing roses before the horses' feet. It was all admirably arranged, and everything had been provided for—except the weather. Suddenly a terrific storm broke over Paris. Orosmane made haste to shelter Mérope and Jocaste beneath an umbrella ; Brutus, Lusignan, Zaïre and Nanine scuttled into a hackney-coach ; the fifty virgins, bespattered with mud to the waist, tucked their *péplums* under their arms, and tying pocket-handkerchiefs round their throats, draggled on through the mud under a perfect deluge of rain. The colours began to run and the

figure of the dead hero to look more and more lamentable every moment; the Roman Senators' togas hung limp and wretched under the downpour, which obstinately refused to stop. It was under these discouraging circumstances that Voltaire, 12th July, 1791, entered the Panthéon!

Rousseau followed him thither three years later to the pleasing strains of the *Devin de Village*, and his triumph was equally superb.

The inhabitants of Ermenonville had conveyed the body to Paris to the accompaniment of "simple, naïve music"—"the chosen airs of the man of nature, such as day by day the lover sings over to his mistress, the tender wife to her happy mate. Presently the procession reaches the great Basin in the Tuileries gardens, which represented the Isle of Poplars, and there he received the tribute of the spectators' tears."¹ The coffin remained there for the night, continuing its progress next day for the Temple of Great Men. It was escorted by Deputies of Sections, artistes from the theatres, mothers, "clad in antique fashion and holding tender infants by the hand," peasants from the country, a deputation of citizens of Geneva, the statue of Liberty, and to wind up, "a group of members of the National Convention, encircled by a tricolour riband and preceded by the *Lighthouse of Legislators*". This noble spectacle stirred the "poetic spirit and sensibility" of the *Citoyen* Olivier Corancez so strongly that he improvised on the spot, as the cortège passed, a touching piece of verse which was acclaimed by all. It ended:—

Par tes leçons, mes enfants ont un père,
Et moi, père, j'ai des enfants!²

¹ Mercier, *Tableaux de Paris*.

² "By your teachings my infants have a father, and I, their father, have children!"

The obsequies were concluded by the singing of "Dans ma cabane obscure," and each man as he went home could be heard still humming the air with evident emotion.

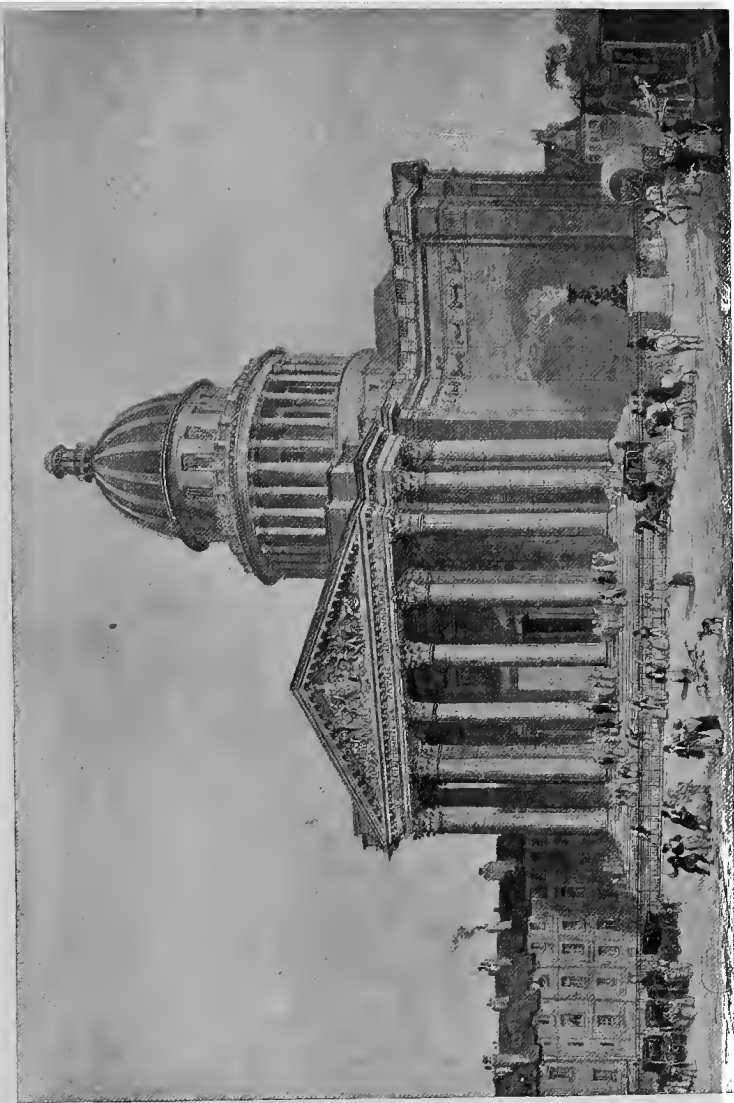
Then, after dealing with the history of the building, how pleasant it would be to tell the fair audience of some of the many events, heroic or calamitous, that have happened beneath its shadow,—to say, for instance: "Here on this identical spot, just where we stand at this moment, at the upper end of the *Rue Valette*—then known as the *Rue des Sept-Voies*—it was that, on 9th March, 1804, at seven in the evening, Georges Cadoudal, disguised as a market porter, emerged from the dark corner where he had been lurking, and leapt into the cabriolet No. 53". Leridant, his accomplice, sat on the box, who had been waiting for him at the corner of the *Rue des Sept-Voies*, between the railings of the Panthéon builders' sheds and the old walls of the Collège Montaigu. For a month or more the wily conspirator, Bonaparte's daring adversary, had been in hiding, lodging at a fruiterer's in the *Montagne-Sainte-Genève*. But at last the game was scented; tracked down by all the police of Paris, Georges felt the meshes of the net spread by Réal for his capture closing in about his place of concealment. At all hazards he must fly and make for the refuge prepared in case of final emergency in the *Rue du Four-Saint-Germain*, at Caron's the royalist perfumer's. Just as Georges put his foot on the step, three police officers, who had been waiting in ambush, flung themselves upon him and tried to seize him—in vain. Two friends dash to the rescue and Georges throws them off. . . . "Whip up, Leridant, drive like fury!" and the horse darts like an arrow down the *Rue*

Saint-Étienne-des-Grecs. But a policeman, Caniolle by name, has still to be reckoned with; hanging on to the springs behind, he is whirled away in this wild, midnight race, amid shouting of men and cracking of whips. At



Rue Saint-Étienne-des-Grecs

the turning of the *Rue de l'Observance*, close to the Odéon, Georges springs out, meaning to escape by darting down one of the little tortuous streets near the *École de Médecine*. Caniolle pounces on him; another officer comes to the rescue; Georges stretches them on the pavement with a brace of pistol shots, but he is seized



The Panthéon in 1837

himself, secured, and lodged in prison—soon to meet his fate on the scaffold.

A few steps under the towering walls of the Panthéon—which an excellent lithograph by Raffet¹ shows us on the night of 22nd December, 1830, reflecting the blazing bivouac fires kindled by the troops fraternizing with the people—and we shall see before us the narrow opening of the steeply descending *Montagne-Sainte-Genève*, with its dull row of gloomy looking houses, hump-backed, tumble-down, where sheltering beneath the wide porches of ancient hôtels of the nobility a score of humble industries are carried on.

Behind us is the charming western façade of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont. There it was that, on 3rd January, 1857, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the first day of the *neuvaine* (or nine days' festival) of St. Geneviève, horrid cries were suddenly heard: "Monseigneur has been assassinated!"² A moment more and the public were seen dragging out into the Place a man with an ashen face dressed in black, his hands red with blood. It was Verger, a disrobed priest, who had just planted his knife in the

¹ Imp. lithog. de Gihaut frères, Éditeurs (Album de 1831).

² Three Archbishops of Paris met with violent deaths within a space of twenty-three years.

Monseigneur Affre was shot during the Revolution of 1848, while exhorting the rival factions to make peace from the top of the barricade in the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, 25th June, 1848.

Monseigneur Sibour was stabbed on the altar-steps at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont by a fanatical priest, 3rd January, 1857.

Monseigneur Darboy was shot in cold blood with other prisoners, in the prison of La Roquette, where he was detained as a hostage by the Communards, 24th May, 1871.

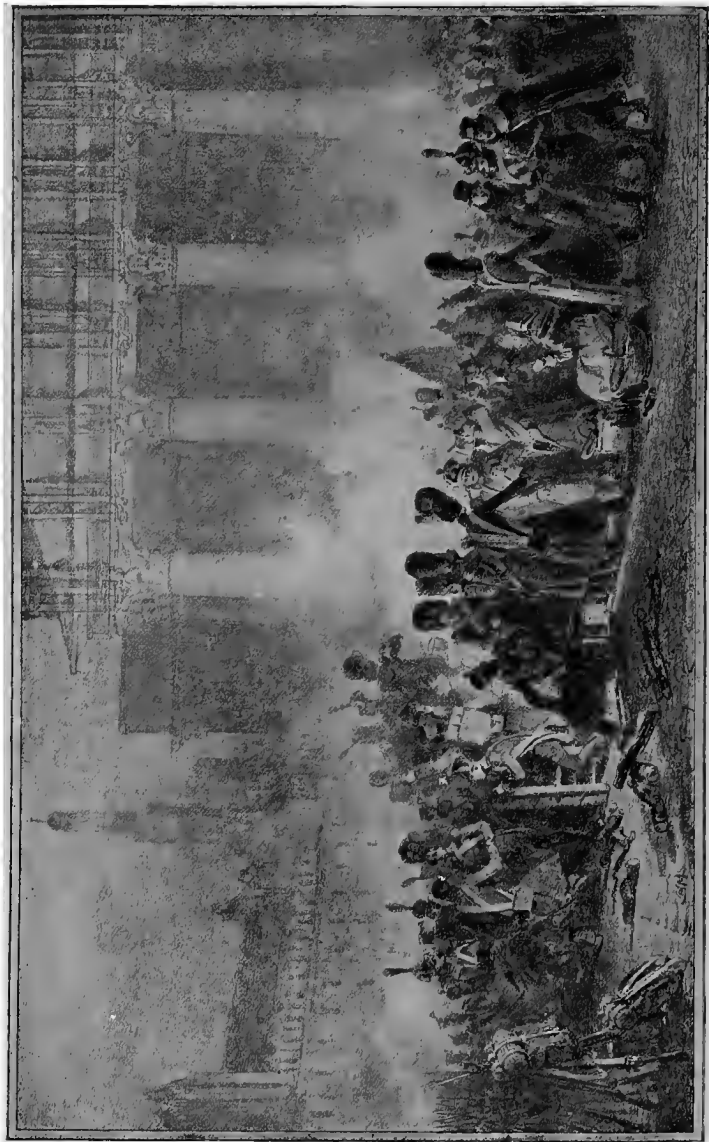
The blood-stained clothes and other mementoes of all three are preserved in the sacristy of Notre-Dame. [Transl.]

heart of Monseigneur Sibour, Archbishop of Paris. By some strange presentiment the Archbishop had that very morning deposited his will in the hands of the Abbé Cutolli, his private secretary. At his trial Verger's be-



Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Genève

haviour was that of a madman. One plea out of a score in the course of his rambling defence will suffice. "Madame's deposition," he objected to one witness, the woman who let out chairs in the church and who gave evidence for the prosecution, "is null and void. It is expressly



Night of 22nd December, 1830—Troops Fraternizing with the People

forbidden by the Doctrine of Our Saviour Jesus Christ to take money in churches ; now I paid Madame ten cen-



Fair of the *Neuvaine-Sainte-Geneviève*

times to enter the nave. It is simony ; I trust Madame



Church of Saint-Étienne-et-Victor in 1787





Church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont in 1837

will remember this, and it will be for the good of her soul!"¹

Now let us enter the church which saw this odious crime committed; let us admire the strikingly elegant *jubé*,² erected by Biard in 1609, and gaze reverently on the shrine containing what is left of the relics of St. Geneviève, which were burnt during the Revolution in the Place de Grève. The Deputy Fayau by-the-by had the delicate thoughtfulness to send to the Pope the official report of the pleasing ceremony. Then we should visit the little cloister of the sixteenth century, adjoining the church, lighted by marvellous painted windows, masterpieces of Pinaigrier. Finally leaving by the door in the *Rue Clovis* and keeping along the Gothic façade of the old-time refectory of the monks of St. Geneviève, which under the Revolution was used as a democratic club, where Babœuf preached his political gospel, we reach the *Rue d'Ulm*. A plaque of black marble records the fact that here, in a miserable lodging transformed into a laboratory, the great Pasteur began his immortal investigations.

But we must not quit this old-world *quartier Latin* without making a *détour* by the *Rue Lhomond* to visit one of the least known of the old houses of Paris. The exterior is grey and uninviting-looking, and more likely to repel than to attract visitors. Nevertheless, ring the bell—it is No. 27; a key grates in the lock, the heavy door rolls back on its hinges, and a gentle, smiling

¹ *Les Causes Célèbres*: "Procès Verger".

² The most striking feature of the church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont is perhaps the exquisite Renaissance *jubé*, or rood-loft, dividing nave and choir, round the pillars of which two graceful spiral staircases ascend, giving a highly original aspect to the interior. It was erected in 1609 the church itself, except the classical West Front of 1620, dating from the early sixteenth century; the choir was begun in 1517. [Transl.]

face appears in the opening. It is a Sister in a little pleated nun's cap. Then you enter by a vaulted entrance passage leading to a small paved and moss-grown courtyard. You turn round and look up, and you are in fairyland. A miracle of carved stone rises before your eye, a very gem of seventeenth-century art, the Hôtel Sainte-Aure.¹

The Dubarry has leant her white hands on the lovely wrought-iron balustrade of that exquisite balcony, for she lived for a time in her first youth—quite against her will, be it said, and by order of the authorities—in this charming and peaceful abode where pious women now spend a life of prayer and good works. They go on quietly with their customary tasks, moving noiselessly to and fro with little discreet steps and seem utterly undisturbed by the presence of the dreamer who is there to fill his eyes with the fascinating picture. "No doubt it is a gentleman interested in architecture," murmurs the Sister Superior.

How remote it all seems from Paris! What an abode of infinite calm and rest! Convent bells ring softly, the ear catching a faint echo dulled by distance, the notes of chimes filter down through the air, children's laughter makes itself heard . . . while the Panthéon projects its huge grey outline with imposing effect against the rosy clouds of sunset.

The dusk descends, dropping its soft, vague, elusive shadows over the dream-like scene. It is the witching hour for calling up tender associations. . . .

Surely our pretty Parisiennes were right, it is indeed a thousands pities not to know Paris!

¹ At the present time it is a lay institution, but the reception accorded visitors by the ladies who direct the establishment remains as gracious as ever it was.

THE PASSAGE DU COMMERCE

THE COUR DE ROUEN—THE INN OF THE CHEVAL-BLANC

IN 1875 the whole quarter of the *École-de-Médecine* was in process of reconstruction. The formation of the new *Boulevard Saint-Germain* involved the destruction of hundreds of old houses and swept out of existence a perfect labyrinth of little streets that had once been famous in the heroic days of the Great Revolution—the *Rue des Cordeliers*, the *Rue du Paon*, the *Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain*, the *Rue du Jardinnet*, and a part of the *Passage du Commerce*.

We started away in high spirits from the *École des Beaux-Arts*, Dagnan, François Flameng, one or two other friends and myself, to take a last look at these time-honoured walls so soon to vanish under the navvies' picks. The ruin of such scenes of past events connected with the great and terrible days of popular revolt cannot fail to rouse a certain stirring of the heart in the onlooker.

So it was here, in these narrow, crooked, dark, evil-smelling lanes, that the mighty men lived whose energy and audacity and stubborn determination revolutionised the old world! Each of these unpretending houses had its aureole of memories; I cannot even now walk along the *Boulevard Saint-Germain* past the statue of Danton without thinking of the vast arched gateway which used to stand there, forming the entrance to the *Passage du*

Commerce and once leading to the dwelling of the great *Conventionnel*.

Our master Victorien Sardou, that passionate lover of Paris, lived for many years in this district, and under his magic words the dead bones live, the old associations grow vivid and precise. "There, look, exactly on the



Rue des Cordeliers

spot where the third cab is standing on that rank, was the door of Marat's house, No. 20, in the *Rue des Cordeliers*, next to a house with a corner turret. Danton, his near neighbour, used to call for him there to go fifty yards farther up the street, to the *Club des Cordeliers*"—on the site now

occupied by the *École Pratique de Chirurgie* and the *Musée Dupuytren*. Marat would be slow in appearing,

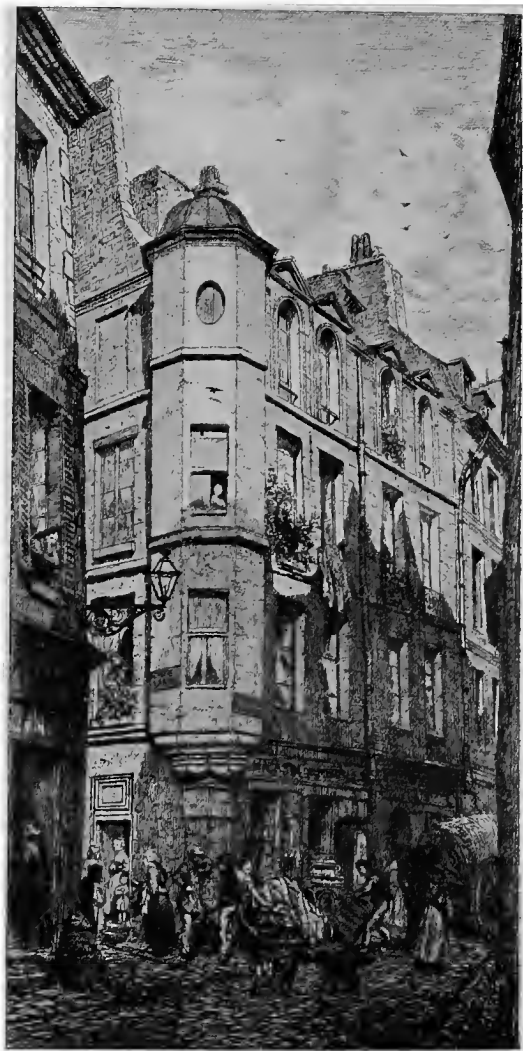


Ancient Streets destroyed by the formation of the *Boulevard Saint-Germain* and Danton, to make him hurry, would shout his name

in his powerful voice and rap with his key upon the iron rail of the stairs. The same stairs which Charlotte Corday climbed on 13th July, 1793, at seven in the evening, "dressed in a loose sprigged gown and wearing a tall-crowned hat with a black cockade and three green cords," before pulling the iron chain which served as bell-rope at Marat's own door! These walls re-echoed the shouts of "Murder, murder! the 'People's Friend' has been murdered!" raised by Simonne Everard and the *commissionnaire* Laurent Bas.¹ Then Sardou tells us, my good friend Lenôtre and me, all about his visit to the Docteur Galtier who in 1854 occupied Marat's rooms, still quite unaltered at that date. He describes the little closet, ten feet by six and a half, where the copper *sabot* stood in which the popular pamphleteer used to take his medicated baths. Even the figured wall-paper was there intact, representing "twisted columns upon a whitey-grey background," covering the wall facing the narrow window, to the left of the bath. At the very place where Charlotte Corday sat, Sardou had found himself able to reconstitute each momentary incident of the tragic interview, and repeat on the identical spot the fatal blow of vengeance.

What memories again cling to the corner overshadowed by the statue of Danton facing the old house, No. 87, of the *Boulevard Saint-Germain*, where the *Citoyenne* Simon kept house! It was there on 31st March, 1793—at early dawn, six o'clock in the morning—the musket-butts of the sectionaries rang on the flags; amidst a scene of panic

¹ The *Citoyen* Fualdès, "domiciled Rue Honoré," was one of the jury-men who pronounced judgment at the trial of Charlotte Corday—the same who was assassinated under tragic circumstances, 18th May, 1817, in the *Rue des Hebdomadiers*, at Rodez.



House with corner turret in the *Rue des Cordeliers*

and shouting and indignant protests, they dared to arrest Danton, the Titan of the Revolution, the man of the 10th of August! At the same instant of time in the *Place de l'Odéon*, at the corner house of the *Rue Crébillon*, the same fate was overtaking Camille Desmoulins! "We shall very soon gut that stuffed turbot," Vadier had muttered at the *Comité de Sureté Générale*; and Robespierre, whose jealous, atrabilious nature had never forgiven Camille for his description of him as a "foolish tiresome temporiser," any more than he had forgotten Danton's threat "to spin him at the end of his thumb like a top," had run them both in! An hour later Camille and Danton came face to face at the prison of the Luxembourg, and it was at that very moment Camille received the news of his mother's death.

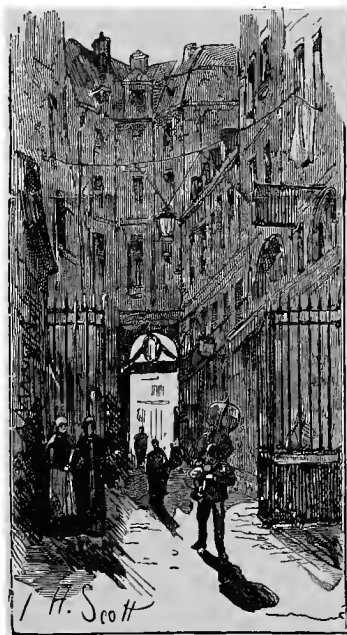
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The *Passage du Commerce*, where the tragedy befell, still exists for the greater part of its length. Thither we propose to-day to take any of our Parisian fellow-citizens who seem likely to be ill-acquainted with this ancient and highly picturesque district.

Newsvendors, fruiterers, bookbinders, dealers in all kinds and descriptions of second-hand oddments, come first; further on, at No. 9, stands Durel's strange, old-world book-shop, where, in 1790, Guillotin¹ made experiments on sheep with the cutting blade of his newly invented "philanthropic machine for beheading". Over the way, at No. 8, the widow of Brissot installed in 1794 a reading-

¹Dr. Joseph Ignace Guillotin invented, or at any rate, perfected, the guillotine; he was actuated by philanthropic motives, his object being to enable capital punishment to be inflicted with the minimum of pain. It was not officially sanctioned till April, 1792, in France. [Transl.]

room with the decapitated Girondist's books of jurisprudence. There she lived with her child under surveillance of an officer of the law ; but presently the "suspect" and her guard grew reconciled to each other's society, and on Sundays the gendarme dressed in mufti and giving an



Passage du Commerce

accommodating arm to the *Citoyenne* Brissot would take the condemned man's son to trundle his hoop in the *Jardin - Egalité*. In the adjoining shop, a foreman printer, destined one day to be Napoleon's Maréchal Brune, superintended the press where the *Ami du Peuple* was produced, while Marat himself, in a dressing-gown "turned back with imitation panther skin," used to come to read the proofs of his sanguinary journal.

At No. 4 a locksmith has installed his forge and fires in the basement of a tower dating back to Philippe-Auguste, for just here went the old line of the walls of Paris. Bicycle wheels, bunches of keys, broken bells and iron gates to be mended litter the old stones which the King of France used to surround his capital with a rampart of defence, while

each blast of the bellows throws broad, ruddy gleams over the weird scene.

About halfway along the Passage a tortuous alley branches off, leading to the *Cour de Rouen*—not *Rohan* ; it formed part originally of the old Paris mansion of the Archbishops of Rouen.

A few years ago the dingy stones were half-hidden by flowers and foliage ; over the top of a low wall bounding the gardens, on a higher level, of a neighbouring boarding-school, fell clusters of lilac and branches of pink and white chestnuts, making a delightful *bit*. Alas ! a wretched photographer's studio has been put up, utterly destroying the rare picturesqueness of this quaint corner of old Paris !

Old mansions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lean against each other for mutual support, dilapidated, shabby, weather-stained, yet brightened by little window gardens on almost every floor. A sickly fig straggles along a water-pipe, strings are stretched here and there up which climb convolvulus and bind-weed and clematis ; in the window corners hang caged birds, and below bloom patches of mignonette and pansies. The very lofts are gay with flowers, irises grow in the corners of walls, the grass is green round the ancient "mounting-block" once used for getting on and off their nags by the grave doctors of the Sorbonne who made their abode in this district. An old well, Coictier's Well—the *Cour de Rouen* is built on the site formerly occupied on the city wall by the garden of Louis XI.'s famous physician—supplies water for these horticultural efforts of the humble Parisian households which have succeeded the high-born proprietors of former days.

Queer notices are to be seen stuck up. "Office of

the *Ciel* (Heaven) newspaper on the fourth flight" might be read, and next it the eminently Parisian announce-



Cour de Rouen (Rohan)

ment: "Little hands wanted for flowers and feathers," which reads somehow curiously poetical.





... wanted for flowers and feathers,
which reads somehow curiously poetical.

At the hour of *déjeuner* work-girls hurry along, pushing and crowding, their tangled hair gleaming with bits of tinsel, pink rose petals or silk network. Or else the school for little girls is just coming out; the merry throng darts past, copy-books and satchels under their arms; there is a pretty hurly-burly of shouts and laughter, then the charming troop, after clearing the handcart on which a white-capped peasant woman has piled a load of golden gilliflowers, yellow mimosas, violets and pink hyacinths, scatters in all directions, leaving behind a scent of flowers.

It is a waft of springtide come to perfume these old dark stones, blackened by the storms of so many winters!

Now leaving the *Passage du Commerce* by the *Rue Saint-André-des-Arts* we find ourselves facing the *Rue Mazet*—formerly called the *Rue Contrescarpe*—the warlike name being accounted for by the neighbourhood of the old walls of Philippe-Auguste. There stood in old days the *Porte Buci*, which was betrayed to the Burgundians by Perrinet-Leclerc. Here in the *Rue Mazet* were held, at Magny's well-known restaurant (the house was pulled down some years ago and rebuilt) the famous dinners whereof Edmund de Goncourt has constituted himself the historiographer, and which included Sainte-Beuve, Ernest Renan, Gustave Flaubert, Gavarni, Théophile Gautier, and so on.

We will call a halt at No. 5, before the high-arched gateway, vaulted and painted a blood-red, which gives access to the *Cheval-Blanc*.

Here, in 1652, under Louis XIV., was the bureau of the Orleans and Blois coaches. Every morning, at six o'clock in summer, and ten in winter, the public convey-

ances, which reached Orleans in two days (by way of Linas, Arpajon, Étampes and Toury), started from this vast courtyard, crowded with travellers, porters, friends and acquaintances, servant-women, parcels, packages and trunks. Amidst cracking of whips, blowing of horns, shouts and farewells and waving handkerchiefs, the ponderous vehicle would get under way in a huge cloud of



Courtyard of the *Cheval-Blanc*

dust. Postillions swearing, dogs barking, women crying—here were concentrated the excitement of departure, the joy of returning, the pathos of farewell—a very microcosm of human life!

Now this life is fallen dead, but the surroundings are still the same, and are striking enough. The ancient inn falling to ruin, the old-fashioned courtyard where the

grass grows between the stones, are just as they were in the days when d'Artagnan, as Dumas tells us in his happy way, alighted there (or would have alighted, if he had really lived), arriving from Meung on his yellow horse! It is now what it always was; stables and coach-houses are there still.

A score or so of horses munch their hay, tied to the posts of pent-houses that date from the *Grand Monarque*, or under the smoke-begrimed beams sheltering the mangers of an older time. Market carts are ranged in convenient corners, fowls peck at the rich manure heaps, lean cats bask in the sun beside the great iron-bound stone posts, chipped and battered by the thousands of knocks and shocks they have endured in the course of three hundred years!

From this courtyard, once so full of life and stir, travellers departed for long and distant journeys; the only destination you can book for nowadays is the Land of Dreams! Yes, it is one of the charms of Paris for lovers of the Past to find here and there such old corners as this, left almost intact amid modern improvements—spots where they can call up the visions of olden times they love so well!

THE RUE VISCONTI

BETTER perhaps than dusty chronicles the old streets of Paris tell the history of the Past to such as know how to question them. Amongst the richest in old associations should be reckoned surely the Rue Visconti.¹ Almost opposite the *École des Beaux-Arts*, it connects the *Rue Bonaparte* with the *Rue de Seine*. Down to 1864 it was called the Rue des Marais-Saint-Germain, and originally the site formed part of the *Pré aux Clercs*, the rendez-vous of all the King's minions and Court exquisites who resorted there to cut each other's throats gallantly and gaily in the heroic times celebrated by Mérimée in his *Chronique du règne de Charles IX.*, and set to music by Hérold :—

Les rendez-vous de noble compagnie
Se donnent tous en ce charmant séjour. . . .²

At a later date the *Pré aux Clercs*³ was abandoned to neglect, and became a general receptacle of town rubbish. Alienated by the University of Paris which owned the

¹ Some famous vineyards flourished there. One of these, belonging to the Abbey of Saint-Germain, extended from the *Petit Pont* all the way to the *Rue Bonaparte*. The river banks were covered with fishermen's huts and stalls for the sale of fresh fish.

² *Le Pré aux Clercs*, act I. : "The meetings of noble company are all held in this charming resort."

³ The ancient *Pré Aux Clercs* occupied the ground now covered by the *Rue de Seine*, *Rue Jacob* and *Rue Bonaparte*.

land, it was divided up and built over with little houses and gardens. It was a rough, lonely, "shy" neighbourhood; the persecuted Protestants established themselves there, and in 1660, the date of the Conjuraton of Amboise, the *Rue des Marais* with good reason acquired the nickname of "the Little Geneva".¹ The poet—and noble—Nicolas des Yveteaux built himself a choice retreat surrounded by flowers and vines and greenery. "There he lived," writes Tallemant des Réaux, "like a sort of Grand Turk in his Seraglio."

The old street still exists, a dark, damp, miry alley, so narrow that the scavengers "do" it with one sweep of their broom. It has all the look of some back lane in a country town where there is barely room for a vehicle to pass. Yet there are several fine old houses still standing, like the curious Hôtel de La Rochefoucauld, No. 14, and the house where Haro lived, the learned expert visited by Ingres and Delacroix,² while five or six balconies of wrought-iron show their bold rounded contours above deeply recessed doorways of seventeenth-century date. . . . But it is mainly coal-dealers and letters of furnished rooms and cook-shop keepers, selling *blanquette de Limoux* (cheap white wine) at 10 centimes the glass, who have made it their chosen residence.

It was not so always. At No. 19, a house of noble

¹ In 1559 the Huguenots held their first National Synod in the *Rue des Marais*, and the *Lieutenant Criminel* raided a house for "non-observance of Friday".

² M. de Rochegude further mentions, in his *Guide pratique à travers le Vieux Paris*, No. 23, where the President Langlois lived in the eighteenth century, Nos. 15 and 13, occupied during the same century by the *Filles de la Visitation Sainte-Marie*, facing across the way the old *Hôtels Saint-Simon* and *de Louvencourt*.

proportions, may be read this inscription: "Hôtel de Ranes, built on the site of the *Petit Pré aux Clercs*. Jean Racine died here 22nd April, 1699, Adrienne Lecouvreur in 1730. Here likewise lived Champmeslé and Hippolyte Clairon."



Rue Visconti

We ring and enter. The *concierge* apologises most politely; no, he cannot give us the required information, he is only newly come to the house and never knew "the Monsieur Racine the gentlemen are anxious about." Finally, the amiable owner, M. Dagoury, is so obliging as

to do the honours of the house where the great Poet came to live in 1693, his heart still bleeding from the base imputations of La Voisin accusing him of the death of the fair Duparc whom he had loved so tenderly! This infamous charge, the loss of the King's favour, world weariness and the "curse of genius," combined to cut short the great Dramatist's life. "A priest of the Church of Saint-André-des-Arts brought him the last sacraments. . . . He expired between three and four o'clock in the morning, 'the hour when men die,' as it says in the Book of Job; his age was fifty-nine and four months."¹

What remains of this past opulence? The staircase, formerly adorned with a railing of wrought-iron, no longer exists, and recent alterations, alas! have destroyed the original arrangement of the rooms on the second floor, where doubtless the Poet lived with his seven children, the first being devoted to the reception rooms. There we still find a *salon* of noble dimensions, some old woodwork, and the original blocks of the polished oak floor over which glided the satin slippers and red-heeled shoes of the pretty women and gentlemen of taste who honoured the entertainments of the "divine" Racine with their presence.²

Through the windows are caught glimpses of tree-tops and behind nearly all these old dreary houses lurk small bits of greenery where the blackbirds whistle.

¹ Anatole France, Preface to the *Théâtre de J. Racine* (Édition Lemerre).

² The rooms were still intact in 1888. Racine kept horses and men-servants, and owned more than one coach. In a letter addressed to his son, Attaché with the Comte de Bonrepaux, the French Ambassador in Holland, the Poet begs him to make the Ambassador promise "to lodge with him during the short stay he will be making in Paris" (17th November, 1698).

Le calme des jardins profonds s'idéalise;
 L'âme du soir s'annonce à la tour de l'église.
 Écoute . . . l'heure est bleue et le ciel s'angélise.¹

Shut in between the *Rue Jacob*, the *Rue de Seine* and the *Rue Bonaparte*, other flowery retreats are to be found. One of them contains a "Temple of Friendship," touching



Courtyard of an Old House, now destroyed, in the *Rue Visconti* in its pretty old-world charm, and Mme. Charles Max, the great singer, gathers armfuls of lilacs from the masses of verdure framing in her artistic home in the *Rue Jacob*. . . . They are the remains, now parcelled out among many proprietors, of Racine's gardens, the shady pleasaunces, the great trees of which mingled their boughs

¹ A. Samain, *Promenade à l'Étang* (Le Jardin de l'Infante).

with those of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Later on they sheltered Adrienne Lecouvreur and H. Clairon, these two fascinating actresses having succeeded the Poet as occupants of this mansion so replete with time-honoured associations.

It was from its *porte-cochère* that, on 21st March, 1730, on a dark, moonless night, two hackney-coaches drove out, which, following the line of the quays, came to a stop in the purlieu of the *Grenouillère*, much about the spot where the present Chamber of Deputies stands. A manager, M. de Laubinière, got out of the first vehicle; out of the second appeared two street porters carrying a strange-looking load. A hole was hurriedly dug in the wet earth of a piece of waste land, and the package placed in it. It was the body of Adrienne Lecouvreur—of the *Théâtre Français*,—who had died in the arms of the Maréchal de Saxe of a sudden and mysterious malady. “As she had not had time to declare her renunciation of the stage, it had proved impossible to obtain a plot of ground to bury her in;” and so the remains of this woman, who was so ardently loved, rest to this day in the cellars of the *Hôtel Jouvencel*, 115 *Rue de Grenelle*, under the pavement of a coach-house; as for the mortuary slab, it is to be found somewhere in the attics!

Eighteen years later, Mlle. de Clairon, that “*chiffon coiffé*” (rag doll with a powdered head), took up her abode at the *Hôtel de Ranes*. “I was in sore need,” she writes in her *Souvenirs*, “of a little peace and quietness for my studies and my poor health which was already badly shaken. . . . They told me of a little house in the *Rue des Marais-Saint-Germain*, and informed me that Racine had dwelt there. . . . Well, that is where I would fain

live and die." As a matter of fact, she lived there eighteen years, received the homage of the Court and Society, was the object of universal adoration; but died elsewhere!

.

What memories cling about the old house! yet teeming as it is with associations, it is not the only dwelling in



Portrait of Balzac

the venerable street to rouse our curiosity and respect. Just beside it, No. 17 stirs the heart with a still more

Imprimerie

Paris, ce 27^e août 1827

De E. Balzac et A. Barbier,

RUE DES MARAIS 6, G., N. 17

M. Balzac a l'honneur de
vous adresser de la part de
M. le procureur général
tout-jurip

1.^o que de deux effets qu'il a
à payer fin de mois, vendredi
prochain, l'un app. de 1437^{fr} 20 c.
ou qui est censé payable chez
M. Boncompagni

2.^o celui de 1,000 fr. app. au
Comité de M. de la Haye, rue
de Madame

il a l'honneur de lui présenter
les affectueux civilités



Autograph Letter of Balzac

poignant emotion. In this house, or rather two houses, of unpretending appearance, and whose almost modern exterior contrasts oddly with the old buildings all about it, the immortal Balzac carried on the trade of printer,—and regretted it bitterly all his life. At this present time a signboard occupies the long, recessed frontage: “School



Rue Visconti (after A. Lepère)

copy-books. Herment, late Garnier, Maker of Account-books and Ledgers.” Yes, it is a printing-office to this day, and the description Balzac gives of it in the first volume of his *Illusions Perdues* is still exact: “The ground-floor formed one immense room lighted from the street by an old-fashioned shop-window, and from the courtyard behind by a large sash-window.” M. Herment’s

office occupies the room, a square, high-ceilinged apartment, lighted by a window giving on the *Rue Visconti*, where Balzac lived, and loved with passionate ardour the woman whose nature was so divinely sweet and good, and whom he always called the "Dilecta,"—the *Chosen One* !

In their admirable study on the *Jeunesse de Balzac*, MM. G. Hanotaux and G. Vicaire have vividly described the "Mount of Sorrows" the genial and unworldly Balzac had to climb, harassed for money, worn out with work, supported under the tempest of calamity solely by the tender sympathy of the incomparable mistress to whom in utter sincerity he could dedicate his portrait with the inscription summing up his love and gratitude : *Et nunc, et semper* !—"Now and always".

. . . Beaten in a hopeless struggle, the unhappy man liquidated, 26th September, 1828, the printing business, which had proved so disastrous, abandoning to his creditors the apparatus, etc., he had got together, and signing bills to the amount of 40,000 francs, which he had eventually to meet,—capital and interest,—out of the profits on his books. It was a dead-weight he dragged about with him almost to the end of his life ! Two storeys above the printing office, a little door leads into a vast, brilliantly lighted studio. Paul Delaroche and Eugène Lami once occupied it ; later on, E. Delacroix painted there, from 1838 to 1843. There the great artist executed *Médée*, *La Justice de Trajan*, *Les Croisés à Constantinople*, *Le Naufrage du Don Juan* . . . , a whole series of masterpieces ! To-day the amiable Duc de Guiche occupies this work-room of glorious memories, which he was so obliging



Rue Visconti.—From Plan of the *Quartier Saint-Germain-des-Prés*, by
Jaillot, 1774

as to show us with his customary kindness and courtesy.¹

Another, a last memory—of a very different sort—hangs about the *Rue Visconti*; a regicide lived there!

On 26th June, 1836, King Louis-Philippe was leaving the Louvre, where he had been to inspect some new rooms in the *Musée* lately opened to the public. He had examined with special attention and considerable emotion the model in cork of the *Boulevard du Temple* at the time of the murderous attempt made on his life by Fieschi the year before, which had resulted in the death of so many innocent people. The drums beat the signal for departure, and King, Queen and Madame Adelaïde took their seats in the carriage, which drove under the *Guichet*,—the arched gateway of the *Carrousel*.

At that moment a young man took aim at Louis-Philippe “with a walking-stick which he held in both hands”. A faint explosion was heard, a thread of smoke rose in the air, and the King pursued his way without a scratch. The would-be assassin was seized by the indignant crowd and dragged to the nearest police-office. There he was searched; a dagger was found on him unsheathed and the blade wrapped in paper. He said his name was

¹ Many other artists lived at one time or another in the *Rue Visconti*. The sculptor Foyatier inhabited No. 14 from 1827 to 1829. At No. 17 here are some of the names of lodgers who succeeded one another: Paul Delarocche (1827 to 1834); Eugène Lami (1827 to 1835); Delacroix (1838 to 1843). Jean Cousin dwelt there about 1547, and the architect du Cerceau from 1580 to 1614. A letter of the most learned Arthur Pougin tells us how he knew at one time the painter “Ducornet (born without arms)”. (Thus he signed his works and his correspondence.) “I have seen him a number of times working in his *atelier* with his right foot unstockinged. A dwarf and deformed, with an enormous head and a thundering voice, he was a strange figure indeed,—and this abortion was called Cæsar!”

Alibaud, and that he lived at No. 3 in the *Rue des Marais-Saint-Germain*, where he occupied the most wretched room in the *Hôtel du Pont-des-Arts*. An examination of the place led to the discovery of balls and cartridges; Alibaud likewise possessed sundry odd volumes,—Chateaubriand's *Les Martyrs*, an *Essai sur les Mœurs*, and the *Works of Saint-Just*! The murderous weapon consisted of a gun-barrel fixed in a walking-cane; the charge was exploded by means of a spring and catch let off by pulling the ornamental tassel of the walking-stick. The shot had grazed the King, who afterwards found the wad in his bushy whiskers!

While waiting for Louis-Philippe to come out, Alibaud had played two games of billiards in a neighbouring café, but had refused to “amuse himself with the girls,” because “time pressed”.¹

Arraigned before the Court of Assize, the accused pleaded enthusiasm in the cause of democracy. “I belong to a poor, and therefore honest, family!” . . . were the opening words of the defence he insisted on making on his own behalf.

On 11th July, at five in the morning, this ill-balanced fool, his head covered with the black veil of parricides, was executed in the *Place Saint-Jacques*!

¹ *Les Causes Célèbres*: “Affaire Alibaud”.

ROUND ABOUT SAINT-SULPICE¹

UNDER the rain that pours down in a never-ceasing deluge, changing the *Place Saint-Sulpice* into a lake of mud, the carriages draw up one after another before the great Doorway of the Church. Men and women disappear into the yawning porch, between files of the faithful, or of mere curious spectators watching the pretty Parisiennes get out from automobile or brougham and hurry under shelter. Some of them turn to the left and pass in by a little door in the corner of the Chapel of St. Anne, decorated by the painter Eugène Delacroix. We will follow and climb the narrow winding stone staircase which leads to the loft of the Great Organ.

We ascend slowly ; the scanty daylight filters through narrow slits in the thick walls ; here and there we catch a glimpse, looking small and insignificant and dulled by the fog and smoke of the city, of the monumental fountain in the middle of the *Place*, the cab-stand and the station of the Auteuil tramway, a spot of green amidst a wide ex-

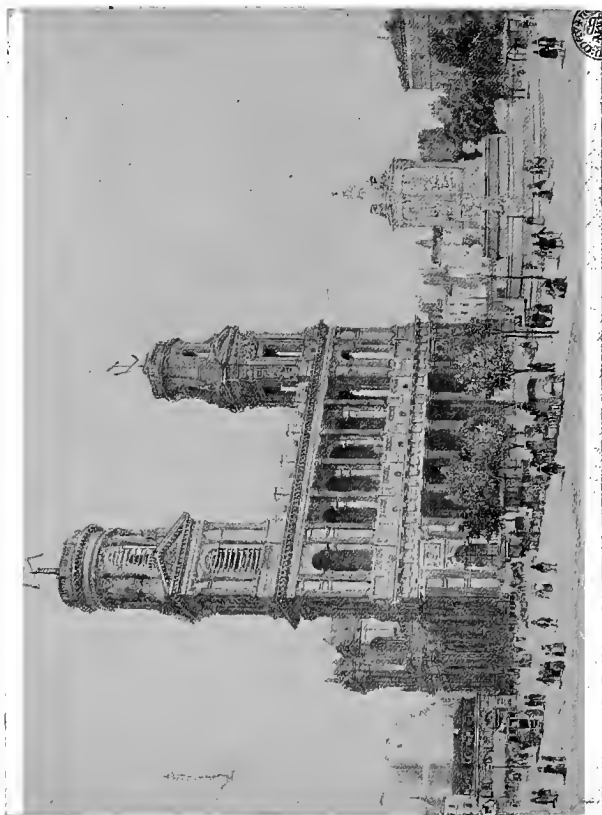
¹ Saint-Sulpice is the largest and most imposing, though far from the most beautiful, of the Paris Churches on the *Rive Gauche*. Indeed in size it is hardly, if at all, inferior to Notre-Dame itself, though from its plain and heavy Classical architecture its full proportions are hardly realised. The present edifice was begun under Louis XIV., and completed in 1749, chiefly from the plans of Servandoni, from whom the neighbouring Rue Servandoni takes its present name. The organ is one of the famous instruments of the world ; built originally by Cliquot, it was reconstructed by the celebrated Cavaillé-Coll in the 'nineties. [Transl.]

panse of grey. A vaulted passage now takes us to the organ-loft itself. From that elevated standpoint we are going to assist at the High Mass, in company with Ch. M. Widor, the eminent composer and wonder-working organist of Saint-Sulpice.

Between our eyes and the floor of the church the great lustres with their glittering lights interpose a perfect constellation of stars, while far away, to the left of the Altar, under a white beplumed canopy, amid the smoke of incense and flaming of candles, motionless on his throne, mitre in hand, like some golden idol, some rigid, hieratic icon, sits a Prince of the Church,—the Bishop of Martinique as a matter of fact,—presiding at the rite. Over our heads the bells are swinging; their mighty clangour reaches us in a dull roar, sifted and softened by the sloping slats of the louvre-boards, but it sets the tower walls quivering round us and the floor shaking beneath our feet. Calm and alert, Widor, seated in the centre of his immense semi-circular instrument, inspects his five tiers of keyboards, pulls out the stops ticketed with musical or odd-sounding names,—*vox humana*, flute, clarinet, piccolo, bassoon, *tuba mirabilis*,—tests the easy working of the shifting foot-rests one above another that form the pedals, . . . a bell rings and the Mass begins.

We watch the striking scene from between the huge pipes of unpolished metal belonging to the organ of 1781, the same old-time instrument that accompanied the *Ça ira* in the days of the Great Revolution when Saint-Sulpice was dedicated to the worship of Reason. Women in bright-coloured frocks beneath heavy fur cloaks strike a note of subdued elegance and pretty piety as they listen to the solemn fugue of Bach; the air is full of the fragrance

of incense surging up to us, mingled with the scent of white heliotrope and the fashionable "*jardin de mon curé*," quite appropriate on a day like this. Above our heads,



Church of Saint-Sulpice

huge sculptured angels of wood, the work of Clodion or Duret, crane forward as if fascinated and admiring like ourselves. Down below, in the Choir, the Bishop has risen from his throne, and blessed the congregation with

a wide sweeping gesture of benediction. The church empties slowly, and the faithful disperse with discreetly muffled footsteps.

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First traversing a small room in which Widor has piously brought together the portraits of his famous predecessors in office, Nivers, Clérambault, Séjan, we mount more steps and finally reach a little Chapel containing a precious relic, the Dauphin's organ, bought in 1793 by a dealer at the Trianon sale, and repurchased by the church authorities in 1804. What memories, sad and sweet, are called up, as we listen to the old-fashioned airs of Gluck and Mozart which Widor plays us on the very keyboard once touched by the taper fingers of Queen Marie-Antoinette.

The Sacristy, entered to the right of the High Altar, is a delightful place. A graceful gallery of wrought-iron, relieved by ornaments of gilt copper, surmounts a series of panels of carved woodwork displaying all the unrivalled grace and charm of the eighteenth century. In this room, on Wednesday, 29th December, 1790, Robespierre, Pétion, Sillery and Mercier signed the marriage registry as witnesses of the union of Camille Desmoulins and Lucile Duplessis. The love story of the "Procureur Général, of the Lantern" was generally known, and the Parisians, sympathetic and curious, crowded the narrow space which was all that then existed in front of the western colonnades, and clung to the bars of the great gates of Saint-Sulpice to catch a glimpse of the rosy cheeks of "the little Duplessis". The Abbé Bérardier, Camille's former schoolmaster, married the pair, and Sillery reported in the evening to Madame Élisabeth how, as he

signed the certificate, the Vicaire of Saint-Sulpice, Gueudeville, dropped the pen out of his trembling fingers as his astounded eyes read the names of all these witnesses, already so notorious and so feared in Paris. . . . Robes-



Madame Roland

pierre and Pétion, during the service, had held the canopy over the head of the newly wedded couple! All this happiness was to fade away like a dream. Less than four years afterwards the two heads, Lucile's and Camille's,

fell, within a week of each other, by order of Robespierre, beneath the knife of the guillotine in the *Place de la Révolution*.

We were still talking of those dreadful days as we walked by the slabs of red and green marble which case the church walls in the neighbourhood of this most interesting room, when our master in these studies, Sardou, who was conducting us, exclaimed: "Look at those marbles; they could hardly have expected ever to end their days in a church and turn Christian; they were Pagan enough once!"

Then our wonderful friend, who is so admirably posted in every detail, told us how these marble plaques formed under Louis XIV. the broad steps down which splashed the foaming waters of the Great Cascade at the *Château de Marly*. On the King's death, the Council of Regency decided to pull down Marly altogether as too costly, but Saint-Simon just saved it from destruction. However, the Cascade was sacrificed and its place taken by a lawn; the marbles were dismantled, removed to Paris and utilised for the decoration of Saint-Sulpice.

The Church is surrounded by an entanglement of little streets with old-world names and a certain quiet Provincial charm, the *Rue Palatine*, the *Rue Férou*, the *Rue Garancière*. It is easy to reproduce in imagination the ancient look of this silent, semi-ecclesiastical quarter. The only sounds that enlivened it, the song of birds twittering in the great gardens of the nobles' mansions and the houses of religious communities, and the everlasting pealing of bells calling the faithful to prayer from all the neighbourhood. It was only natural that, under the

Terror, the proscribed should come here for hiding in these quiet, mysterious domiciles. It was at No. 21 in the *Rue des Fossoyeurs* (now 15 *Rue Servandoni*) that Condorcet, when outlawed, found the asylum which enabled him for a long time to cheat the scaffold.

Inside and out the unpretending edifice is still in pretty nearly the same state as in 1794. At that time the owner was named Mme. Vernet, a kinswoman of the artists who have made the name illustrious. She was asked to give shelter to one of the proscribed: "Is he an honest man? Is he virtuous?" "Yes, *citoyenne*." "Then my house is open to him," answered this excellent woman. And so Condorcet for long months, with the tacit connivance of the good folks who visited at Mme. Vernet's, lived a secluded life in two small rooms on the first floor looking into the courtyard,—a little dismal court bordering a wooden staircase, the echoing footsteps on which must often have set him shuddering. Almost every day the pretty Mme. Condorcet, defying death, would glide down this damp and dismal *Rue des Fossoyeurs* to cheer the condemned prisoner with her smile. The brave woman meantime kept a linen-drapery shop, 352 *Rue Saint-Honoré*, as a means of subsistence, and used to paint "miniatures and portraits in pastel, on the mezzanine floor, in a little room above the *porte cochère*". As for poor Condorcet himself, he was finishing—cruel irony!—his admirable work, *Esquisse des progrès de l'esprit humain* ("Sketch of the Progressive Advance of the Human Mind"). On 25th March, 1794, discovering that a domiciliary visit was to be paid next day at Mme. Vernet's, and firmly resolved he would no longer compromise his beloved wife and intrepid hostess, Condorcet

fled from the house, dressed as a workman and wearing a coarse woollen cap. In his pockets he carried, beside a Horace, a number of little pellets of poison, a compound of opium and stramonium, prepared by Cabanis. . . .

The horrors of the great man's last hours are matter of history,—the refuge promised, and afterwards refused, by the Suards at Fontenay-aux-Roses, the night spent in the quarries of Clamart, then the arrest in a roadside tavern of the unhappy philosopher. Perishing of hunger, broken down with weariness, with haggard face and bleeding feet, he sat munching greedily and reading his Horace between the bites, while excited patriots drank their liquor at the next table. The vagabond fellow reading his Latin book struck them as decidedly suspicious; so he is arrested, hoisted on to a broken-down hack, and haled off in this fashion, he, one of the greatest men of his day, to the village lock-up at Bourg-la-Reine. Next morning, the constable, who bethought him at last of taking his prisoner something to eat, stumbled over a corpse; cold, hunger, poison had done their deadly task!

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It was at the corner house of the *Rue Férou*, under the shadow of Saint-Sulpice, that in the year 1754, after supper at the house of one of the doorkeepers of the Luxembourg, the architect Lescombat was killed, at ten in the evening, by a certain Montgeot, who drove a knife into his back. Montgeot was the lover of Lescombat's wife, an excitable woman, famous for her beauty, who had planned the murder to get rid of a husband who was in her way. To divert suspicion, Montgeot went himself and informed the police, declaring his "dear master" had been accidentally killed in the course of a quarrel. The scandal was



Rue Férou

tremendous; all Paris talked of nothing but this crime of licentious passion; then followed a hundred enquiries, examinations and cross-examinations, and finally both man and woman were condemned to death.¹ Montgeot was broken alive on the wheel in the *Place de la Croix-Rouge*, and Mme. Lescombat hanged in the *Place de Grève*. "There was an extraordinary concourse of spectators in the adjacent streets merely to see her go by, while every room overlooking the *Place de Grève* had been engaged beforehand to see her hanged. Even the Towers of Notre-Dame had their onlookers. The people clapped hands as at a play, street-hawkers vended the printed history of her crime and her portrait,—not nearly so pretty as she was in reality." ²

So the whole terrible drama ended with a melancholy ballad chanted by the Paris street-singers of 1755.³

The *Rue Férou*, where Lescombat met his fate, is to this day delightfully picturesque, dominated on the one side by the lofty towers of Saint-Sulpice and on the other bordered by the trees of the Luxembourg Gardens. On the right-hand side is a raised terrace, belonging to the great composer Massenet's house. Yes, at No. 48 in the *Rue de Vaugirard*, on the first floor of an ancient

¹ "Decree of the Court of the Parlement condemning Jean-Louis de Montgeot to be broken alive in the *Place de Grève* for murder committed on the person of Louis-Alexandre Lescombat, architect; dated 31st December, 1754" (Paris, sold by P. G. Simon, 1755).

² *Journal de Barbier* (July, 1755).

³ Facing the *Rue Férou* there formerly opened an alley called the *Ruelle du Pressoir Notre-Dame*, also known under the name of *L'Uis des Ruelles*. Here Lavoisier lay in hiding, at No. 9. Here he was discovered and arrested. Condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal, he perished on the scaffold, 18th May, of the same year.—G. Pessard, *Dictionnaire historique de Paris*.

mansion, once the abode of nobles, whose sunny windows look out on the flower-beds of the Petit-Luxembourg, our dear master, Massenet, has found a delicious nest. There, in a great room, filled with tapestries and books and carved oak and choice knick-knacks, every morning from four o'clock, sits the master working at a little table,—style Louis XV., Manon's table surely! Summer and winter alike, at this early hour, does Massenet, warmly wrapped in his great red dressing-gown, light his fire, or throw open his window, according to the time of year, and sets to at his daily task. Thus were written *Marie-Magdeleine*, *Manon*, *Werther*, *La Navarraise*, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, masterpieces one and all,—and *Ariane*, which we were applauding only yesterday.

Sometimes, as day breaks, Massenet, traversing his little sleeping-room, in his brilliant costume of cardinal's scarlet, steps out on to his terrace, and as he smokes a morning cigarette, the great composer watches the summit of the great Towers of Saint-Sulpice redden under the first fires of the rising sun . . . then he comes back to resume his noble activity of every day.

We examine with tender interest the relics and mementoes that adorn the walls,—photographs of dead friends, family souvenirs, a card of Flaubert's dated the day of the first representation of the *Roi de Lahore*, and inscribed: "I pity you this morning, I shall envy you this evening!" Then a letter draws our eye—it is a word from Georges Bizet:—

" . . . Never before has our modern school produced anything quite like it; you make my head reel, you terrible fellow! You are tremendous, there! My wife has just put the score of *Marie-Magdeleine* under lock and

key. That speaks for itself ! You are really getting too dangerous altogether. All the same, be sure of this, dear master, no one is more sincere in his admiration and his affection than your devoted friend

“BIZET”

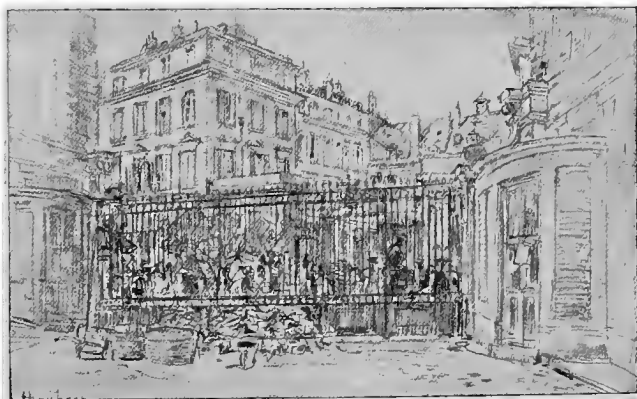
I have copied the letter here, being convinced I can never find a more eloquent peroration for my chapter !

THE ABBAYE-AUX-BOIS

AT the corner of the *Rue de Sèvres* and the *Rue de la Chaise*, behind the *Square du Bon Marché*, a long, gloomy wall, thickly overgrown with ivy, contrasts strangely with the new houses of this modernised district. Above the wall appear the tops of trees, and further on roofs covered with greenish-grey tiles and surmounted by bell-turrets topped like a mandarin's hat. This severe-looking building is the famous *Abbaye-aux-Bois*. Very soon, alas! the old historic house, which gave asylum to such famous friendships and sheltered at one time or another all our greatest celebrities, is destined to disappear. So, ere the house-breakers' pick and the woodmen's axe lay low the ancient trees and destroy the storied stones, let it be ours to make a last pious pilgrimage to this house of gentle memories.

The entrance to the *Abbaye-aux-Bois* is at No. 16 *Rue de Sèvres*. The iron gates used formerly to be kept tightly closed; but now the cage is empty, and the door wide open. A gardener is pruning a clump of rose-bushes in the centre of the vast court that stretches in front of the vast building. The general tone of these is a rusty red; the long rows of windows, all closed, give an impression of death and desolation; behind the small curtainless panes all is still and silent; everything suggests that a tempest

of disaster has passed upon the place. Meantime a score or so of Nuns, with black veils and gowns, and white bodices, still continue to occupy, in subdued and sorrowful resignation, a few rooms in this vast edifice, while waiting for the final dispersal, now very near at hand. To their perfect courtesy we owed the privilege of going through the deserted buildings.¹



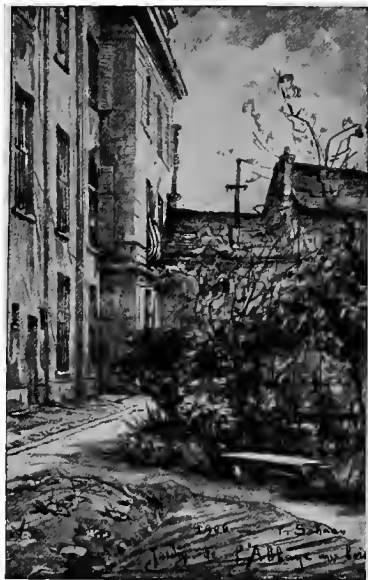
Abbaye-aux-Bois

First we visit the antique parlours, where, behind gratings of closely-set bars, still floats the light curtain of faded woollen which hung as a veil between the Nuns and the outside world. Then our footsteps echo down the long vaulted corridors, bearing at intervals the stern monastic injunction,—*Silence*. . . . We pass by silent cloistered courts, where the rank grass is already sprout-

¹ Savalette de Langes, the enigmatic heroine—or hero—of the amazing story told by M. G. Lenôtre in his *Vieux papiers, vieilles maisons*, 2nd series, lived as a Lady Boarder at the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*, it seems, before being lodged at Versailles at the King's expense, between 1824 and 1832.

ing between the worn paving-stones, which it frames round with a green, velvety border. A tall, carved door opens suddenly on a neglected garden, and the strong scent of box fills our nostrils. In this dreary, savage place, who would ever dream he was in the very heart of Paris?

. . . À peine un vague son
Dit que la ville est là qui chante sa chanson! . . .¹



Garden of the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*

Every shade of green is there, from the intense emerald green that dyes the trunks of the old trees to the pale hue of the lichens that cushion the stone benches half-buried in the unkempt grass, and the mosses that have crept over the garden-paths; through the shadowy haze gleams the dull, metallic lustre of the leaves of yews, pines and ivy. . . .

A few weeks more perhaps, and of all this scene, so poetical and full of associations, nothing will be left but some heaps of rotting refuse and bundles of faggots,

¹ Paul Verlaine, *Nocturne Parisien*. Poésies, p. 53. . . . "Scarcely a vague sound tells that the City is there singing its own song! . . ."

which the Auvergnat firewood dealers in the *Rue de Sèvres* will sell by retail to their customers! . . . As we follow these long garden alleys, interspersed with little altar-shrines now abandoned to decay, our conductress points out two narrow windows on the third floor.

"These," she tells us, "were the first rooms occupied by Mme. Récamier; the Sœur Sainte-Clotilde, who has been in the *Abbaye* ever since 1843, can still remember her, in spite of her great age; she has seen Chateaubriand, feeble and tottering, cross the entrance court, leaning on his valet's arm. Mme. Récamier would rest on his—for she was almost blind—when she walked with him in the gardens."

Mme. Récamier! . . . Chateaubriand! . . . what memories do the names recall! Instinctively we seem to see the long procession making devout pilgrimage to the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*, the long procession of admirers of this great man and adorers of this most charming woman. In her was incarnate that most precious of all feminine perfections, the gift of pleasing. Mme. Récamier was incomparable in her powers of seduction—"the eyes met a smile that said as plain as words, 'Yes, I understand!'" She applied her whole will to the task,—and she was irresistible.¹

From the first day he knew her, Chateaubriand adored her; for thirty years, no matter what his adventures elsewhere, he adopted the gentle habit of consecrating some hours of every afternoon to this friendship, so loving and so binding. Absent, his letters spoke for him: "I

¹ Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. i., p. 123.—"Not enough woman and too much goddess. . . . I have never seen anything so angelic in the Paris mud."—Lamartine, *Cours familier de littérature*, vol. ix.

write to you from a wretched hovel to tell you that, whether in France or out of France, I live for you and wait for you".—"Men speak of my high estate and my wealth!—my wealth is you, and my high estate is the recollection of you."—"I will not recover, I cannot recover, away from you." These three fragments of letters, dated at three different dates far apart, declare the continuity of this mutual affection.¹ M. de Montlosier used to assert that, like the Cid, Mme. Récamier could speak of "five hundred of my friends"; Canova, "to be ideal, had only to copy his model"; Ampère,² Ballanche,³ Benjamin Constant,⁴ Prince August of Prussia and M. de Montmorency cherished her with jealous affection; Lamartine, albeit somewhat coldly received by M. de Chateaubriand, who spoke of him amongst intimates as "that great noodle," arranged bouquets and wrote sentimental verses for her; General Lamarque declared himself "infatuated with her," and Horace Vernet dedicated his first drawing to her. The years seemed to pass over Mme. Récamier's head without harming her wondrous charm and prestige. Sainte-Beuve leaves us a portrait-sketch full of feeling,⁵

¹ "She loved Chateaubriand passionately and profoundly,—how deeply could be gauged by the grief his infidelities cost her."—Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, vol. ii., p. 100.

² "That New Year's Day when I saw you appear, suddenly, in a white dress, with that grace of which nothing had ever given me a notion, will never quit my memory."—*Correspondance d'Ampère*, 1829.

³ "Ballanche was not a man, he was a sublime somnambulist in life."—Lamartine, *Cours familier de littérature*, p. 130.

⁴ "When I feel that danger is a way of winning an expression of interest from you, I feel only pleasure at incurring it."—Benjamin Constant to Mme. Récamier.

⁵ "Never did Mme. de Maintenon employ so much ingenuity to keep Louis XIV. amused as Mme. Récamier did for Chateaubriand."—Sainte-Beuve.

and the good Sister Sainte-Clotilde, who was so obliging as to recall her recollections of old times for our benefit, told us only yesterday of "the unforgettable charm of that sweet lady, aged but still oh! so pretty". Then the latest, and not least accomplished, of her biographers, M. Edouard Herriot, has quite recently devoted an admirable study¹ to her, full of sympathetic feeling . . . the charm works still! . . .

Needless to say envy and evil-speaking and base deduction, the words that never fail to spring up about success, all flourished exceedingly.²

But that in nowise hindered the fair Juliette from conquering Paris by her grace and beauty, disarming anger and hostility and "perfecting the art of friendship".³

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We climb the three flights leading to the first lodging occupied by Mme. Récamier when in October, 1819, after her husband's ruin, she came, at the age of forty-two, to find refuge at the *Abbaye* in two little rooms which Chateaubriand thus describes: "A dark corridor separated

¹ Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis* (2 vols.).

² "Juliette et René s'aimaient d'amour si tendre
Que Dieu sans les punir a pu les pardonner.
Il n'a pas voulu que l'une put donner
Ce que l'autre ne pouvait prendre."

(*Intermédiaire des Curieux et des Chercheurs*,—French Notes and Queries, vol. xv., p. 591.)

"Juliette and René loved with so tender a love that God found it in His heart to pardon them without punishing. He would not suffer that one could give what the other could not receive."

³ Sainte-Beuve, *Nouveaux Lundis*.

Brillat-Savarin dedicated one of his stories to her in these terms: "'Tis the tribute of a friendship that dates from your girlhood, and may be the homage of a tenderer feeling. . . . How can I tell . . . at my age, a man dares not any more question his heart."

them . . . the bedchamber was adorned with a bookcase, a harp, the portrait of Mme. de Staël and a moonlight view by Coppet . . . the outlook from the windows was upon the garden of the Abbey. . . . The top branches of an acacia reached the level of the eye. There was a view of church steeples cutting the sky with their points, and far away on the horizon the hills of Sèvres."¹

In these humble rooms, with tiled floors, inconveniently disposed and perched under the slates, Mme. Récamier remained for six years. At the present day the one room is subdivided into two and is occupied by a sempstress and her mother; the acacia which scented the whole floor was felled some time since, and high modern houses cut off a part of the distant blue horizon. Cagebirds sing beside a sewing-machine, fashion-plates are pinned on the walls, a picture of a Breton girl in national costume replaces the figure of Mme. de Staël . . . and we find it hard to realise that in this modest workgirl's room for years the noblest and fairest dames of Paris met daily the men of their day most highly gifted in birth, intellect and fortune!²

In 1826, on the death of the Marquise de Montmirail, Mme. Récamier took up her abode in a set of apartments on the first floor, far larger and indeed almost luxurious. The noble staircase leading to both lodgings opens on the left-hand into the Great Court of the Abbey; it is intact in itself, but the fine balustrade of wrought-iron has been torn down and sold, as also the lustre illuminating the

¹ "The setting sun was gilding the picture, pouring in through the open windows."—*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, vol. i., p. 70, édition Biré.

² "Mme. Récamier at the *Abbaye* never filled a greater place in the world than in this humble workroom."—Sainte-Beuve.

vestibule, where, during the last few years of his life, two footmen used to wait for M. de Chateaubriand to carry



Madame Récamier

him up—on a chair—to the rooms of his old friend and mistress.¹

¹“I am grown cowardly at bearing pain, I am too old and have suffered too much in my day. I fight a sore fight with sorrow and vexation for the few years left to me; this old tattered fragment of my life is scarce worth the care I take of it.”—Chateaubriand, *Souvenirs et Correspondance*.

“M. de Chateaubriand feels it deeply, he cannot leave his room. Mme. Récamier goes to see him there every day, but she only sees him under the fire of Mme. de Chateaubriand’s eyes, who can at last avenge herself for fifty years of neglect.”

The former entrance to Mme. Récamier's apartments was by a door now disused; you enter now by what was the small dining-room, opening into the great historic *salon* where Chateaubriand as an old man communicated extracts to his intimate friends from the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, and organised the public reading of his tragedy of *Moïse* (27th June, 1829). . . . "All that was famous and fascinating in France was there." The men were renowned, the women charming, and you came away "with feelings of, it may be, fictitious emotion, but quite genuine respect".¹ This noble room, so full of glorious memories,² still opens its four windows, two on the *Rue de Sèvres*, two on the horse-shoe terrace which bounds the entrance of the *Abbaye-aux-Bois* on the left hand. A lady artist, with a true æsthetic instinct, has turned it into an *atelier*, where under her skilful supervision, intelligent workwomen and gentlewomen who have fallen on evil days repair old tapestry, embroider copes, illumine missals, design robes and costumes of old lace.

The woodwork and panelling of the room have been

¹ Lamartine, *Cours familier de littérature*.

² "I go over to see Mme. Récamier. The poor lady is losing her sight, and to save what she has left, she surrounds herself with semi-darkness. You can only find your way by feeling into the great salon at the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*; shutters, curtains are all closed, and the light coming from the door would hardly serve to guide your steps, if the poor blind woman's gentle voice did not help you to steer for the great screen which shelters her armchair. Your eyes are shrouded for a while like hers, but you are in a friendly country and you soon recognise M. Ampère's voice and M. Brifaut's. . . . Little by little I see clearer and I can make out persons and objects; the great picture of Corinne which fills the whole of one side of the room becomes visible in its beauty. . . ."—*Derniers Souvenirs*, par le Comte d'Estourmel, pp. 17, 18. "Mme. Récamier died of cholera, 12th May, 1849, in the *Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs*, at her niece's house, at the Library. She was still beautiful, beyond any dispute."



Garden within the Cloisters of the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*

sold, as well as the chimney-piece,¹ against which the "unamusable" Vicomte² used to lean, in a silence the company was fain to regard as expressing general goodwill. Of all the past splendour there remains only the sculptured cornice and the old parquet flooring, where beside the sofa of the blind Juliette stood the armchair of the dying René.³

Chateaubriand writes in the admirable chapter in which he tells of his tragic boyhood at the Château de Combourg:—

"The recollections that awake in my memory overwhelm me with their force and multitude,—and yet what possible meaning have they for the rest of mankind?"⁴

The visit we have just paid to the old house of the *Abbaye-aux-Bois* is an answer to the question. A whole host of phantoms, sad and sweet, has risen only at the call of a woman's name; but then this woman was beautiful

¹ "Underneath the picture of Corinne would stand Chateaubriand, his short stature, his thin legs, his manly bust, his Olympian head."—Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, Notes, p. 389.

² "M. de Chateaubriand pondered more than he talked."

³ "Paris, 1st September, 1847.—The operation which Mme. Récamier finally decided to undergo has definitely failed. She remains as blind as before. They say she is much depressed and in a state of health which, without implying any immediate danger, causes her friends no little anxiety. If she were to be taken from them, it would leave a great void in Chateaubriand's existence. But how far would he feel it. Upon my word, I cannot say. He seems to have fallen into a condition of utter prostration, and I always return full of sorrow whenever I go to see him. *Quantum mutatus!* only to go back twenty years. At any rate he bears his sad state with great courage, if not without weariness. Unfortunately there is no possibility of diverting him, because for that he must be able to talk, and he has not the strength for it."—*Letter from Lamennais to the Baron de Vitrolles.*

⁴ Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*.

and good and lovable, and well deserved the adoration she received.¹

¹ 28th October, 1906, the street loungers crowd before the open Gates of what was once the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*, staring at the house-breakers tearing down the old building. A notice is suspended above the entrance gates to this effect:—

“Demolition of the former Convent of the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*.

“To be sold,—numerous lots of woodwork and carving, oak parquet flooring, timber and carpentry . . . 3,000 yards of ashlar walling, plaster, firewood, etc., etc.”

The contractor for the demolition, M. Marly, has very obligingly offered for the acceptance of the Musée Carnavalet the humble little door once giving access to Mme. Récamier's first lodging in the *Abbaye*.

ROUND ABOUT THE PLACE MAUBERT

THE *Place Maubert* was in the Middle Ages one of the most picturesque "warts" of Paris. The scholars, who swarmed in this quarter, where colleges were so numerous, caroused there with the "pretty rakes" celebrated by Villon. "They danced there pell-mell to the sound of merry flutes and tuneful bagpipes;" they made very merry, "playing high jinks, drinking, feasting . . . lapping Burgundy, white wine and red wine . . . guzzling porringers of tasty meats and licking their chops after,—wine-flasks going round gaily, and hams dancing and cups flying. . . ." ¹ The Square was surrounded by pewterers' shops and taverns, eating-houses and thieves' kitchens; and the good virgins imprisoned in their barred niches at the corners of the dark alleys leading into this centre of noise and joviality, must have seen some very queer sights by the light of the twinkling tapers which at fall of night pious dames would light up in their honour.

The same noisy haunt of popular merry-making served also as a place of execution. Here, in 1546, was burnt alive the unfortunate Étienne Dolet, philosopher and printer, in the reign of François I., the restorer of letters in France, as everybody knows!

At the present day modern improvements have turned

¹ Rabelais, ch. v., bk. 1 *La Vie de Gargantua*.

the *Place Maubert* into a vast open space, commonplace in aspect and abutting on a vulgar market built on the ruins of the old House of the Carmelite Fathers. It is ringed about with a range of liquor-shops whose copper alembics glitter menacingly like so many engines of destruction trained on the Parisian populace. In the middle a deplorable statue recalls the misfortunes of poor Étienne Dolet, and outrages him once more.

The *Rue Maître-Albert* opens to the right, formerly known as the *Rue Perdue*. It is dark and dirty, the tall houses on either hand making it seem even narrower and gloomier than it is. There, at No. 13, in a poor house, now a foul *hôtel garni*, the *Hôtel du Midi*, 7th February, 1820, died Zamor, Madame Dubarry's negro, the ill-conditioned ape who served to divert Louis XV. and was flattered and fawned upon by the Favourite's courtiers. Later on, with villainous ingratitude he helped to bring his benefactress to the guillotine. After the Revolution, an object of universal reprobation and contempt, he took earth in the most dismal house in this dismal *Rue Perdue*.

It was there that Mme. Lejeune, the landlord's daughter, knew him; she used to talk of him to M. Vatel, the enthusiastic biographer of the Dubarry:—

"Zamor was very short," she said, "no taller than I am; he was not five feet. He was a sickly creature, a mulatto more than a negro; his complexion was a dingy yellow, the nose flattish, the hair rather woolly, scanty and turning grey. . . . He made a living by giving elementary lessons, teaching children to read and write, and a smattering of grammar and spelling. . . . He would have had enough to live on, had he not been infatuated with a woman who kept a haberdashery shop. He had

entrusted all his savings to her, and she had lost it for him. . . . The rent he paid was sixty francs a year.”¹

One morning a neighbour saw his door was ajar. As this was unusual, and he was perfectly well-mannered, always passing the time of day with everybody living in the same house, she ventured in, and found him dead in his bed. He had only three francs of money, which lay on his bedside table.

We have visited the room where this pathetic Favourite's favourite died, this squalid buffoon who, “dressed out in a hussar's jacket of red velvet laced with silver, a toy sabre at his side, a furred *colback* on his head, had prowled about the silken skirts of the Dubarry, that wonderful robe of *bleu de France*, with Louis' monogram woven in in oleander sprays, ending with a D for Dubarry in *myosotis*. . . .”

After climbing a dilapidated staircase to the second floor, we reach the miserable room, and an acrid, nauseating smell takes our breath away; the present occupier is a dealer in old cigarette ends collected in the public streets. After picking over his merchandise, he spreads the stuff out to dry on his bed and chest of drawers, on the floor as well as on the little chimney-piece, style Louis XVI., which is still intact, where Zamor used to try and coax his miserable turf fire into a blaze. . . . The windows, which are protected by an iron rail, look into a damp, dark courtyard of narrow proportions, which gives all the light the wretched place receives. Except for the passage and partition which divides the room, already small enough, into two tiny closets, nothing is altered. A

¹ Ch. Vatel, *Histoire de Madame du Barry*, vol. ii., pp. 367, 368,—
“Pièces justificatives.”

short search would doubtless discover on the walls, which were originally whitewashed, the mark of the nails where the portraits of Robespierre and Marat, the gods of the sanctuary, used to hang!

Leaving the melancholy place, we will visit the next



Part of a silk petticoat once belonging to Madame Dubarry

house, No. 15. There a fruiterer has established her quaint little shop in a courtyard that is marked on Turgot's Plan of 1739. A wee girl, with laughing eyes and a mass of tousled yellow hair down her back, was buying this morning three-halfpenny worth of salad; she was like a

sunbeam come to brighten these old stones and their sad associations.

Opposite, at No. 16, a building in ruins still shows some vestiges of Renaissance carvings, and a grocer has stocked his reserve supplies in the cellars that were once—the tradition is open to doubt, however,—dungeons. Under the dark, greasy archway opens a low door which, towards the end of the Second Empire, was the mysterious entrance to a wine-dealer's back-shop. Here, by the light of a smoky lamp, a band of wild-eyed conspirators used to meet to talk over their dreams of overthrowing the Imperial régime. The wine-dealer was named Allemane, and his son, a member of the Commune in 1871, and afterwards a Deputy, has given his name to a section of the Revolutionary party.

Next, turning down the *Rue des Grands-Degrés*, let us make for the *Rue de la Bûcherie*, where we will call a halt before an odd-looking fragment of antiquity at the corner of the *Rue de l'Hôtel-Colbert*. This was once the *Faculté de Médecine*; it is nothing but a picturesque ruin now, pitted with mire and mud, burnt by the sun and worn by the rain, an old building with windows wreathed in garlands of sculptured flower and leaf, overtopped by a monumental dome. From the old, shabby walls brilliant-hued advertisements by Chéret or one of his imitators stare out bright and cheerful, making a delicious discord. Opposite, beneath the severely plain doorway of an old Louis XIV. mansion, a hot milk and coffee stall-keeper has arranged on trestles her heaters and bowls and piles of sugar, and three merry Paris workgirls, bright-coloured handkerchiefs stuck anyhow over their tousled hair, their noses pink with cold, are gulping down in laughing

haste a "*petit noir*" scalding hot before scampering back to the workroom, where their nimble fingers are trimming frocks or wiring artificial flowers.

All that is left of the antique *Rue du Fouarre*—and it is little enough—lies alongside the old buildings of the Hôtel Dieu; two or three dilapidated doorways, a few outlandish-looking roofs alone recall the ancient fame of this *Rue du Feurre*, corrupted into *Rue du Fouarre*,¹ where Rabelais describes Pantagruel as disputing "against all the regents, masters, and orators of the Faculties, and putting them *a quia*". In old French this word *feurre* (whence *fouirage*) meant "straw," and the street owed its appellation to the straw on which the scholars sat grouped about their professors' desks. Did not Philippe-Auguste, in 1208, order the straw which littered his Royal apartments to be given as largesse among the poor? Castles, churches, schools, taverns had no better floor covering; it was only after the Crusades that Oriental carpets and mosaic patterns were introduced into France.

This *Rue du Fouarre* contained the schools of the Four Nations, where work went on with no small degree of vigour. In winter at five in the morning the Mass at

¹ Sauval reports that "in 1358, the University made complaint to the Regent, afterwards Charles V., to the effect that the *Rue au Feurre* was every night encumbered with filth and fetid refuse, brought by ill-conditioned individuals, further, that they were in the habit of forcing the doors of the School to smuggle in persons of evil life, who used to spend the night there and befoul the places where the scholars sat, and the professor's desk to boot".

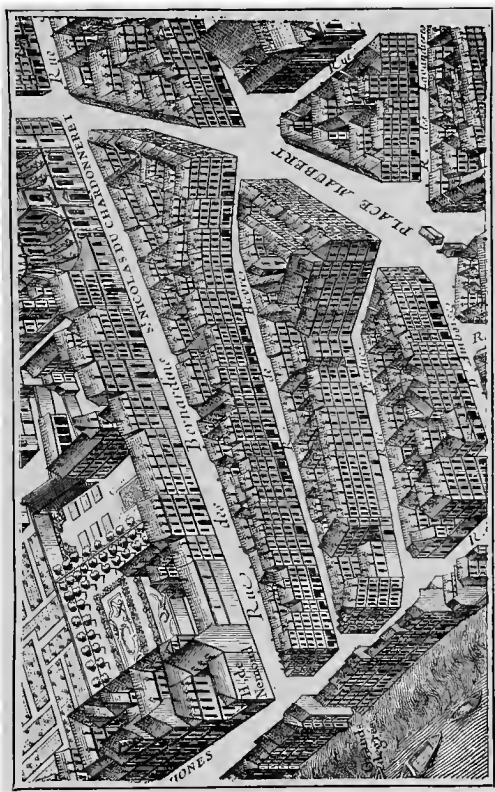
As a result of this petition the Regent decreed that two gates should be set up at either end of the *Rue au Feurre*, which gates should be shut at night-time. Under François I. the street took the name of the *Rue au Feurre*, which was afterwards corrupted into the *Rue du Fouarre*.

the Church of *Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre* announced the opening of the classes, by the light of a few wretched candles; at six prime was rung at Notre-Dame, then tierce sounded, then nones, then vespers. . . . One great memory attaches to the old street; it was there, according to tradition, that the sublime Dante, during one of his two sojourns at Paris, attended the lectures of a famous teacher, Sigier de Brabant. The poet mentions him in his *Paradiso* (canto x., v. 136):—

Essa è la luce eterna di Sigieri
Che leggendo nel vico degli Strami. . . .

“It is the everlasting light of Sigier, who teaching in the street of Straws. . . .” We can still realise the impression he must have kept of that turbulent street, as well as of the long visits he would pay to the humble Church of *Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre*, a few steps away. ✓

Life is full of contrasts. After evoking the glorious memory of Dante, we are to plunge straight into the miriest depths. Next to the *Rue du Fouarre* comes the *Rue des Anglais*, and its squalid horrors. This foul and malodorous alley is destined very shortly to be demolished; and with it will disappear a notorious haunt of bad characters, a recognised stage in the official rounds of inspection of suspicious localities,—the Tavern of the Père Lunette. A gigantic pair of spectacles projecting above a mean-looking front painted red marks the site of this extremely ambiguous establishment. Once inside the door, you find yourself in a narrow passage-way, on your right a huge tin counter ornamented with a globe in which some unhappy gudgeon are flicking their tails. The customers stand about absorbing spirits, half-pints of beer and goes



Round the *Place Maubert*.—From Plan of Paris, known as Turgot's,
of 1739



Remains of the old *Faculté de Médecine*, about 1855

of cherry-brandy ; on the other side, below a row of miniature casks decorated with portraits of celebrities of the day—Zola, Clémenceau, Jules Ferry, Freycinet—stretches an immense wooden bench, clamped to the wall, where



Rue des Anglais and the Cabaret du Père Lunette

the fair sex is graciously permitted to recover from the effects of too copious potations. In the room at the back, the size of a pocket-handkerchief, three deal tables are surrounded by men and women drinking, and more or less drunk, more or less consumptive and unhealthy looking, but all equally sottish and brutalised. Men

smoke and jabber, shout or snore, while a fellow with a guitar sings a sentimental ballad, his back to a wall plastered with comic pictures in which Rochefort's peg-top head and Victor Hugo's Olympian brow stand out conspicuous, cheek by jowl with scenes that would very rightly shock M. Béranger's susceptibilities.

The place is redolent of vice and wretchedness, dissipation and the vilest intoxication . . . yet this ignoble favern cannot be classed as dangerous. I will not go so far as to say that a police raid would not reap from the pockets of the light-fingered gentry who frequent the house a pretty harvest of knives, revolvers and life-preservers; but after all, the majority are petty pickpockets, broken-down university men, habitual drunkards and general ne'er-do-weels rather than ferocious bandits. The Père Lunette does not live up to his reputation; as they say in greenroom slang, "there's a lot of bunkum and paper" about it. They are on the alert for the entrance of the foreigner anxious to make serious investigation into the seamy side of life in Paris, and directly the door opens, the regular customers are quick to throw themselves into studied attitudes to "please the gentleman". It is, with less elaborate scenery, but with the stink thrown in, the Fifth Act of one of those tearing melodramas we see so artistically staged at the *Ambigu* by Pierre Decourcelle. . . . At any rate you leave the place finally, your head aching with the foul smells and hideous sounds, your heart oppressed with the pitiful sights. In spite of all, you are filled with an overmastering pity for the poor creatures who have so utterly forfeited their share of ordinary human pleasures as to be reduced to haunt such detestable dens as this in search of a little gaiety and brightness, and above all a moment of forgetfulness!

THE JARDIN DES PLANTES

THE best part of life is perhaps made up of memories. So I can never enter without a vivid feeling of pleasure the iron gates of the old *Jardin des Plantes*, where, as a mere child, I used to come, a picture book under my arm, with my father, who, like Delacroix, like Barye, like my grandfather P.-J. Mène, like Gérôme and Frémiet and Rosa Bonheur, was in the frequent habit of installing his little modelling stool within a few feet of the lions and tigers he was copying.

We used to get there at an early hour, about eight o'clock, before the arrival of the usual horde of visitors. The keeper, who was called Bocquet—a tall, thin fellow with flashing eyes—would caress his savage charges, address them by name, toss them scraps of meat, to induce them to move about as required, while my father, whom habit had familiarised with the noble beasts, with eyes that are at times so deep and tender, would pat their heads till they came rubbing themselves cat-like against the bars.

The smell was often overpowering and the heat stifling. You could hear the whistling of the ichneumons and pole-cats installed in the round-houses near the exit; now and again a roar of anger would set the window-panes trembling. How diverting were these hours of work in

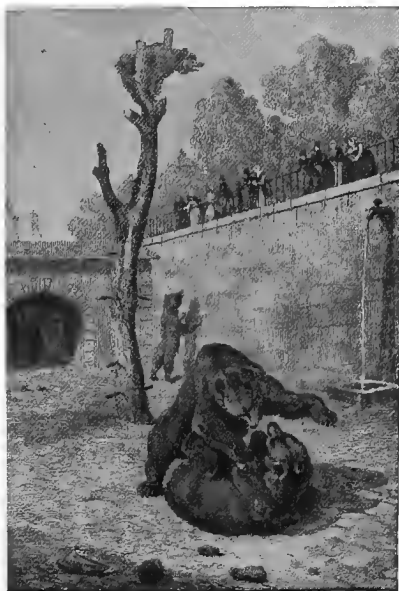
front of the wild beasts' cages, in the back-corridor of the menagerie, close to a little yard where dogs on the chain kept up a yelping and howling!

Then very often it was in the garden itself, on the grass, in front of the stags and fawns, the waders and vultures, that these famous workers would set up their little portable studios, their easels and modelling tables, or sometimes in the reptile house, an ancient building almost tumbling to pieces with age. The crocodiles lived there, imprisoned in long narrow boxes like coffins; then you could see pythons also, and "asps of old Nile," and horrible hairy spiders, salamanders and chameleons, and last but not least, a boa that swallowed a woollen blanket and then brought it up again hardly a bit the worse! The Director used to give us little green lizards and harmless slow-worms that made us scream with fright by suddenly popping their long heads out of the pockets of our schoolboy jackets! Then those headlong scampers round the labyrinth and the cedar which M. de Jussieu—so declares a time-honoured legend it would be sinful to doubt—"brought from Lebanon in his hat," in 1735. . . . How far away it all is, and what memories of childish years this old *Jardin des Plantes* calls up, to be sure!

Amidst all the changes that transform Paris from day to day, it is one of the few corners that have been so fortunate as to keep their delightful, old-fashioned aspect. M. de Buffon would still feel himself quite at home; he would even find his own working-table, still preserved in a sort of library a few steps from a very wonderful marble group of a *Goat and Children*, which should certainly be in the Louvre instead of an out-of-the-way corridor. Very few

of the plates indeed would need any "bringing up to date" in the fine work issued by Curmer in 1842; the "Abysinian Goat Hutches," the "Heron Cages," the "Wild Beast Houses" are precisely as represented in Daubigny's and Ch. Jacque's drawings of that day.

Nor does the public seem greatly altered. Here are the same Parisian idlers craning over the rails of the same bear-pit, trying to persuade "Martin,"—the bear is always "Martin"—to climb for the twentieth time the lopped tree that rises in the middle. The water-plants flower in the same low, stifling hothouses, beside orchids of strange, exotic shapes, and it is in the same old-fashioned theatre



The Bear-Pit at the *Jardin des Plantes*

where so many illustrious savants have held forth that Mme. Madeleine Lemaire, who discourses of roses, poppies and pansies as admirably as she makes their colours live again on her canvases, teaches a charmed and attentive audience of to-day to appreciate the divine beauty of flowers. In Curmer's volumes fine gentlemen dressed like Alfred de

Musset exchange ceremonious bows with elegant ladies draped in Indian shawls in front of the "Entrance of the Great Conservatories"; the surroundings are unchanged, —the children are playing in the very same spots, and on the same wooden chairs the same *grisettes*, in almost identical costumes, sit reading novelettes of the same



The Reservoir

sensational sort. In 1842 it was Eugène Sue's *Mystères de Paris*; in 1906 it is the *Môme aux beaux yeux* by Pierre Decourcelle.

This noble garden has always been in fashion. Founded in 1633 by Louis XIII. on a piece of waste land then used as a general receptacle for garbage, and entrusted to the direction of Gui de la Brosse, the *Jardin*

des Plantes Médicinales—such was its original name—had many difficulties to struggle with at first. But Fagon, Tournefort, Vaillant, then Antoine and Bernard de Jussieu, and finally Buffon,¹ organise, augment and embellish the "*Jardin du Roi*". When the Revolution comes, the Nation lays hands upon the "Muséum d'histoire naturelle," which it supplements with a menagerie formed out of the remains of the Royal collections installed by Louis XIV. on the banks of the *Grand Canal* in the Gardens of Versailles. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre in 1792 pleaded the cause of the poor animals which were dying of hunger. "Shall we kill them," he cried, "to exhibit their skeletons? That would be adding insult to injury!" On 4th September, 1793, the collection is suddenly increased; Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, working in his study at the Gardens, is informed that two Polar bears, a panther, a pair of mandrills, a tiger-cat and several eagles are outside, at his door, claiming hospitality. The animals in fact were vagabonds, in search of a home; by police orders three wandering Menageries had been seized and despatched to the Museum under conduct of their former proprietors, who had been bought out. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire had the cages lined up under his windows, fed out of his own pocket the unhappy starving beasts and raises the erstwhile showmen to the dignity of keepers! Napoleon sends to the Menagerie the Stadtholder of Holland's elephants and the bears of Berne.² Every year

¹ Buffon, who counted among his most valued co-workers Daubenton and Lacépède, died 16th April, 1788, at the *Jardin des Plantes*, in the building fronting the *Rue Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire*.

² On 1st June, 1807, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire writes to Prussia to ask "that advantage be taken of the position of our Armies at Berlin to obtain duplicates of the collection of fishes formed by M. Bloch" (*Vente Charavay*, Nov., 1906).

brings its contribution of rare animals and precious minerals. The *Jardin des*



In the Maze

Plantes is favoured in high quarters, augmented and embellished. On 9th July, 1827, the giraffe is presented to the King, and makes quite a Parisian event; everything is *à la giraffe*, combs, brooches sleeves and sun-shades are all *à la giraffe*, and a fashion shop in the *Passage du Saumon* paints the giraffe on its signboard. There was even a ballad sung in Paris

at the time, beginning with the verse—if it can be called verse :—

C'est de l'acacia qu'elle aime à se nourrir,

and concluding :—

Enfin dans tout Paris on aime sa présence,
Et son séjour promet la paix et l'abondance.¹

¹“Tis the acacia forms its favourite food.—In fact all Paris loves its presence, and its stay promises peace and abundance.”

There was also a song hummed about the streets, the last couplet of which ran as follows :—

(Air: À la façon de Barbari.)
Filles et femmes aujourd'hui
Ont très belle tournure;
Tout un chacun en est séduit
Voyant leur chevelure.
On peigne beaucoup de frisons,
La faridondaine, la faridondon,
Tout est à la Girafe ici,
Birib,
À la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami.

(“ Girls and women nowadays are dressed so smart; every man is fascin-



The Grand Conservatories

To every quarter of the world intrepid and unassuming French savants go forth into voluntary exile in order to enrich the *Jardin des Plantes*. Duvaucel, Chapelier, Jacquemont, and how many other men, have died by the arrows of savages, serpent bites, Indian sunstroke and tropical fevers, to send home to their native land unknown beasts, mysterious plants, fairylike butterflies, rare birds, specimens hitherto missing in the herbaria. Something of their heroic self-devotion, so simple-minded and beautiful, broods over this noble garden of which it has been gracefully said: "It is a terrestrial Paradise, a trifle old-fashioned,—flowers, beasts and men alike; there is even the serpent, and trees you can pluck harmless apples from".¹

The narrowness of the Paris streets before the nineteenth century, the difficulties of moving from place to place, the lowness of the houses, made any wide general view or distant perspective impossible. But to make up for this, the *Jardin des Plantes* possessed a labyrinth, and this maze, and the belvedere that surmounted it was in the eighteenth century eagerly besieged on fête days. The Parisians could for once see Paris! they would point out to each other Vincennes with its great Keep and square Towers, the Cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, the heights of

ated at sight of their pretty hair, which they curl into a hundred curls; everything is *à la Girafe* here, after the fashion of Barbary, my friend.")

¹ Taine wrote in 1849 to Paradol: "Yesterday I was at the *Jardin des Plantes*; I noted in a lonely corner a mound covered with common field grasses, young and green, growing wild and bursting into flower; the sun was shining brightly and I could see the inner life that circulates in these delicate tissues and invigorates the strong, upright stems; the wind blew and set all this harvest of closely growing grasses waving, producing an effect of extraordinary transparency and beauty . . . and I could feel my heart beat high with pleasure! . . ."

Meudon, the windings of the Seine, the far off blue hills of Gentilly. . . . The labyrinth is still there and the scenery has not changed ; the crowd is there too, in the same place, exchanging the very same exclamations of wonder and admiration as they did a hundred years ago! . . . A good-humoured horde, squeezed together in the most diverting confusion, still grins at the monkeys' antics, the otaries' wonderful dives and the prodigious yawns of the hippopotamus ; the elephant still goes on stuffing pounds and pounds of cakes into his big mouth, and the camel rolling his gentle, foolish eyes over a crowd of happy, admiring youngsters ! The climax of excitement is before the gloomy cages, too dark and too small,



Watching the Bears

quite unworthy of Paris, in which the great felines are confined, while odious idiots poke in their ridiculous umbrellas and tease the poor imprisoned brute, dying by inches of decline behind the black bars of his prison.

✓ In the Museum of Anthropology, the crowd files past in fearful silence or talking in whispers before the rows of skeletons, the strange, uncanny looking reconstructions, reminding one in their colossal ignorance of an astounding answer given the painter Vibert some twenty years ago by an old man who served him as a model.

“Come and sit to-morrow, Sunday, père Sauvage ; I shall want you, to finish my picture.”

"Out of the question, Monsieur Vibert ; to-morrow I'm going with the young ones to see my grandfather."

"Your grandfather? Why, how old are you, pray?"

"Seventy-seven."

"And you have a grandfather still alive?"

"Why, certainly . . . in the *Jardin des Plantes*. . . . He's a skeleton, you know . . . not far from the man who killed Kléber . . . Sauvage le Marin. . . . So once a month I go and see him with my grandsons. Oh! the officials all know us, and say: 'Ah! you've come to see grandpapa; all right, he's still there, same room, to the right!'" ✓

A series of fine, spacious buildings contains admirable collections, admirably arranged by the learned Curator, M. E. Pérrier, relics of earlier ages, mammoths, meteoric stones. . . . All the same lovers of the Past will always regret the fascinating little rooms, style Louis XV., the ceilings hung with stuffed crocodiles and flying fish and sword-fish, where the old-time collections of the "*Jardin du Roi*" were exhibited. What a pleasant feeling of homeliness, what a quiet charm, there was about it all! What a perfect setting for the curiosities the grey panelled woodwork with its delicate carving! The finest lepidoptera of all countries were to be seen there, from the glorious butterflies with a metallic sheen of the Indies and Americas to the moths from Fontainebleau that look like dead leaves of trees, yellow and withered; there was to be found the great death's head hawk-moth, no less than the tiny blue butterfly of our French plains! Time had powdered over as it were and lightly tarnished the marvellous brilliance of the original colours; and it was better so. Too brilliant, they would have made a discord in their rather old-fashioned

surroundings ; it was a pleasure the more to admire these jewels of the air lightly overspread with a gossamer film of the dust of ages ! . . .

But dusk is falling ; children's laughter and the song of birds fall silent ; the distant roar of a captive lion or tiger strikes the ear ; a wild dove darts back to its nest in the boughs of a pink chesnut ; the air is fragrant with scent ; the blossoms on every tree waft to the earliest stars their last perfumed breaths, and the grey shades of night descend on the sleeping Garden. . . .

UP THE SEINE

FROM THE PLACE DE LA CONCORDE TO BERCY

ON a warm spring morning I know of no more delightful expedition than to take the boat at the *Concorde* and go up the river as far as the *Pont d'Austerlitz*. The views are both impressive and beautiful; open the eyes and dream of the past, and Paris will tell us tale after tale of the magic of her mighty history!

On the left, the Garden of the Tuileries reflects the greenery of its Terraces in the water. Thence hurried courtier and cit in days gone by to applaud the nautical contests and water sports so much in vogue under Louis XIV., XV. and XVI.; thither resorted polite votaries of Nature to gaze at the sunset behind the hills of Meudon. It was a favourite place of assignation,—the gay and worldly part of the Gardens, just as the corresponding *Terrasse des Feuillants* was the place for politics and noisy discussion.

On the opposite bank, in a line with other old hôtels surrounded by gardens condemned alas! to disappear very shortly, we pass the *Chancellerie de la Légion d'Honneur*,¹ an elegant edifice built to recall a Greek temple,—

¹ The *Chancellerie de la Légion d'Honneur* stands midway along the *Quai d'Orsay*, and faces the Gardens of the Tuileries across the river. It is now confronted on the east by the façade of the new *Quai d'Orsay*

originally the *Hôtel de Salm*. A singularly enigmatic personage, by-the-bye, the said Salm-Kirburg,¹ a German Prince,—of a minute Principality ; “no one could deny him wit, but common sense,—not an iota”.² After wasting prodigious sums in reckless extravagance, his eccentric Highness finally and completely ruined himself in building this charming mansion, where he expended the last remnants of his fortune in giving, in the year 1786, a superb fête, which became a by-word for the terrific crush of company that was invited.³ Next year the architect Rousseau took over the hôtel to cover his expenses and de Salm was now only the tenant at will ! Then comes the Revolution. Lafayette makes the Prince commander of a battalion, and the *Hôtel Salm* is transformed into a Reformist Club. Events moved fast in those days ; the “citoyen Salm, ex-Prince of Germany,” is interned at the *Prison des Carmes* by order of Fouquier-Tinville, under the charge of “being beneath the mask of patriotism only the secret agent of the German Coalition,” and on 5 Thermidor guillotined in the *Place du Trône*. The hôtel was then offered as a lottery prize and won by a wig-maker’s apprentice, Lieuthraud by name.

Terminus of the Orleans Railway, an ornate and imposing, if rather too garish, edifice. The trains are conveyed thither from the old Quai d’Austerlitz station by electric locomotives through a tunnel running under the line of Quays on the south side of the Seine. [Transl.]

¹ “The Prince Salm is here, trying to sell everything and make a grand show ; the Baron de Breteuil declares he is only good for a couple of years more and will end in the hospital,” writes the Marquise de Créquy in August, 1786.

² *Mémoires du Comte de Tilly*, 1830, vol. ii., p. 238.

³ “There was such a host of people there whom the Prince himself did not know that he said to me jokingly : ‘Many folks who are here may very likely think I am invited to the ball too’.”—E. Fournier, *Chronique des Rues de Paris*, p. 144.

The origin of this individual's sudden and enormous fortune was more than suspicious. For several months he amazed Paris with his insolent extravagance; he bought *Bagatelle*, gave his name to a new top-boot cut away in a particular shape, and kept Mlle. Lange "on a footing of 10,000 livres a day, payable in advance,"—Peltier assures



Building of the *Hôtel de Salm*

us of the fact. He gave a fête costing 1,200,000 livres! It was the triumph of the jonquil,—the ex-wigmaker had a special predilection for the flower in question; the walls were covered, the tables decorated with it; the scent was so overpowering that most of the guests felt ill. . . . Some weeks later, Lieuthraud was arrested, condemned as a

forger to four years in irons, to be branded and pilloried. . . . The sentence, however, was not carried out and Lieuthraud disappeared without leaving a trace behind!¹ Under the Directory the hôtel was purged of these base associations, and was used by Mme. de Staël and Benjamin Constant for the sittings of the *Cercle Constitutionnel*² while in 1804 Napoleon installed the Grand Chancellery of the Legion of Honour there.

The building was to encounter even more sinister destinies; in 1871, during the Commune, it was entered by the mob, profaned and devastated, and finally set on fire. It was not till 1878 that it rose again from its ashes, being rebuilt by a National subscription,—a voluntary contribution from the Members of the Legion of Honour

A little further on and still on our right hand, at the corner of the *Quai* and the *Rue de Beaune*, we pass the house, M. de Villette's, where Voltaire died. It was from the Courtyard—still unaltered at the present moment—of this house on the very night of his death, 31st May, 1778, that Voltaire's body, wrapped in a dressing-gown and strapped on the back-seat of a travelling carriage, a fur cap pressed down on the poor head that jogged up and down at each shock of the wheels, set off, under the guise of a sleeping traveller, for the Abbey of Scellières, in Champagne, where it was intended to bury it! An uncommonly bad statue of the great man stands in front of the Institut, the frowning dome and sternly simple outline of which add a note of severity and dignity to this part of Paris,

¹ "What has become of him? I cannot tell, but the river flows for everybody."—Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire*, vol. ii., p. 308.

² "The fire of these exalted spirits having passed there, the *Hôtel de Salm* was purified once more."—E. Fournier, *Chronique des Rues de Paris*, p. 144.

otherwise so gay and humming with life. The sumptuous and venerable building recalls the grand Palaces of Papal Rome, where the grass grows in the deserted courts; fortunately there are the comic lions—poodle-lions, shall we call them?—that grin so good-naturedly at the foot of the grand staircase, to temper the austerity of this noble edifice, so rich in illustrious associations.

Wedged in between the Institut and the fine *Hôtel de la Monnaie* (Mint) is a little Square that recalls the unpretending Place of some quiet country town. Here Mme. Permon, mother of Mme. Junot, Duchesse d'Abrantès, lived up to the time of the Revolution in the house now occupied by a famous bookshop, the *Librairie Pigoreau*. It was on the third floor of this house, in the left-hand corner, in a room under the mansard roof, that Napoleon slept on the rare occasions when he had leave from the *École Militaire*. Mme. Permon had opened her doors to the little Corsican officer. The same fine carved woodwork still adorns the walls of the reception rooms on the ground-floor, where the future Cæsar came to talk of his hopes and ambitions, and the marble chimney-piece is unaltered before which Bonaparte used to dry his "great Puss-in-Boots top-boots, badly made and badly blacked, and which smoked tremendously," declares Mme. d'Abrantès in her *Mémoires*. On the left, the Louvre displays its noble perspective. We mark the little gilded balcony from which Charles IX. did *not* fire on the people on St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, 1572, for the very good reason that at that date the said balcony was not built.¹

¹ The story is well known. Tradition would have it that Charles IX. on the night of St. Bartholomew fired with his own hands on his subjects from one of the windows of the Louvre facing the Quais. The tale was sedulously repeated by Mirabeau and other orators of the Revolution, and

The Seine at this point broadens out magnificently, and behind a clump of greenery from which seems to rise in the luminous background the tapering spire of the Sainte-Chapelle, opens the glorious, the incomparable panorama of the extremity of the Island of the Cité. The river divides, and the *Pont-Neuf* joins the two halves of Paris,—the old *Pont-Neuf* the dedication stone of which Henri III. laid when the first pile rose above the surface on the side of the *Augustins*.

That day the King was a sorry sight to see; he had that very morning buried at Saint-Paul the best beloved of all his favourites, Quélus, who was dead of his wounds received some weeks before at the famous "Combat of the Minions".¹ The mocking Parisians declared the new

an inscription was engraved on the wall in 1795 to mark this particular window: "C'est de cette fenêtre que l'infâme Charles IX., d'exécrable mémoire, a tiré sur le peuple avec une carabine,"—"From this window the infamous Charles IX., of execrable memory, fired on the people with a musket." Six years later, however, it was erased, on the discovery that this portion of the Louvre was not built till the reign of Henri IV. ! [Transl.]

¹ This famous combat was fought out in the *Marché-aux-Chevaux*, on the site of the destroyed *Palais des Tournelles*, between the King's (Henri III.) "minions," Quélus, Schomberg and Maugiron and three of his enemy the Duc d'Anjou's favourites, Antraguët, Ribeirac and Livarot. Of the King's champions two were killed on the spot; the third, Quélus, died of his wounds, after lingering on for some weeks at the house of Bussy d'Amboise, whither he had been carried after the fight. For a vivid account of the whole incident read Dumas' "Lady of Monsoreau,"—particularly the two concluding chapters of Part III., "The Fatal Combat," in Methuen's "Complete Dumas," translated by Alfred Allinson. "The King was inconsolable. He erected three magnificent tombs, on which were carved in marble life-size effigies of his friends. He endowed masses for the repose of their souls, commending them to the prayers of the priests, and at the close of his own prayers, both morning and evening, he added this couplet:—

Que Dieu reçoive en son giron

Quélus, Schomberg et Maugiron ;

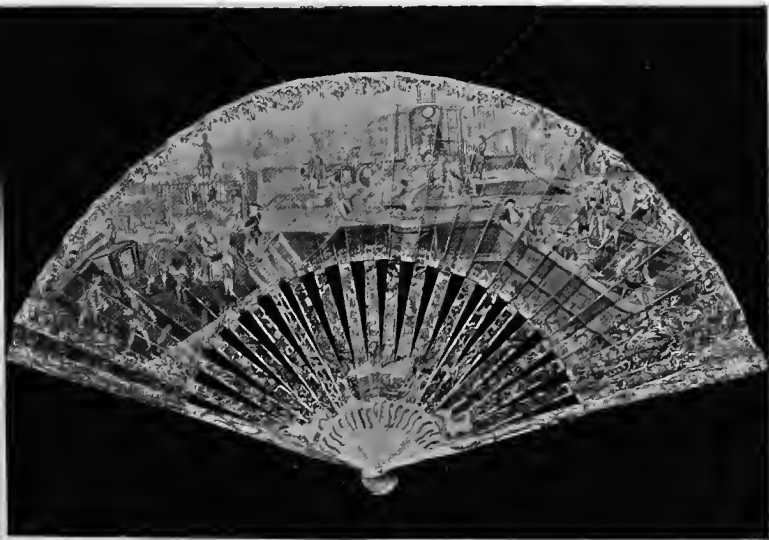
—May the peace of God environ

Quélus, Schomberg and Maugiron." [Transl.]



Pont-Neuf

bridge should be called the Bridge of Tears! The feeling, however, did not last, and after Henri IV. had inaugurated it, on which occasion 'it was still far from firm, and sundry folks, by way of making trial of it, had broken their necks and tumbled into the River,' ¹ the *Pont-Neuf* became the centre of Parisian life and gaiety. There



Traffic on the *Pont-Neuf* (from a fan)

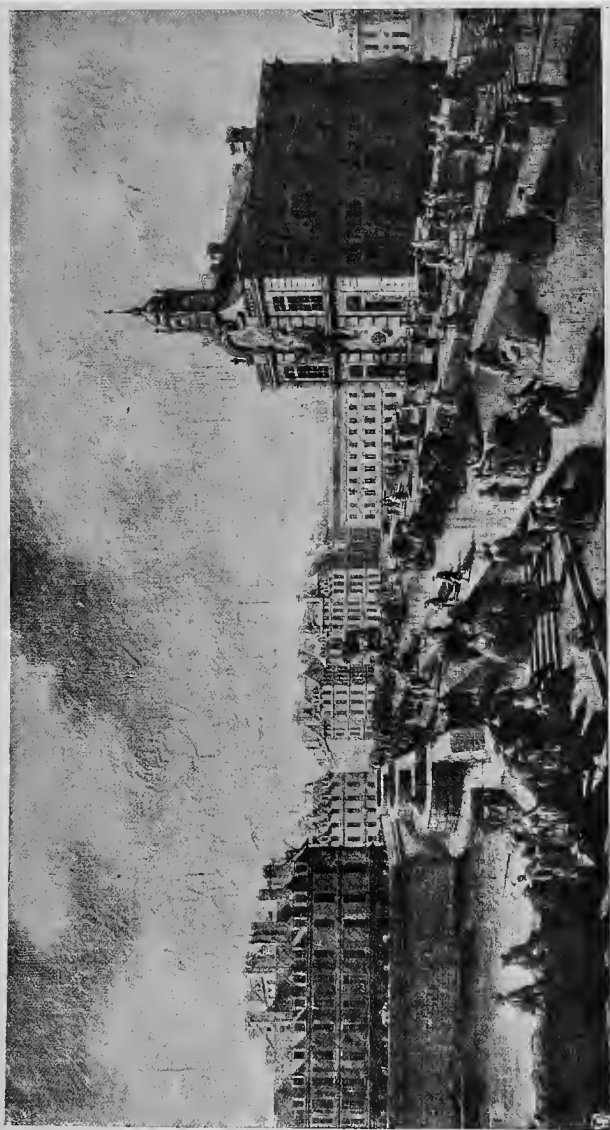
Tabarin tells his idle tales, Mondor sells his balm and Loret comes to gather his daily batch of news. It was a saying in the eighteenth century that it was impossible to cross the Bridge without coming across a Monk, a white horse and two women of gallantry. There the volunteer enrolment took place in 1792, and the alarm-gun sounded

¹ "Mémoires de l'Estoile" (*Journal de Henri IV.*, vol. viii., pp. 83, 84; édition Jouaust).

in the tragic days of Revolution. If the masks that run along its friezes wear so mocking and cynical a face, it is because, for so many ages they have watched the endless comedy of Parisian life defile past. . . .

Facing the Statue of Henri IV., at the entrance of the *Place Dauphine*, in the corner house of the *Quai de l'Horloge*, are the windows on the second floor where Mme. Roland dreamt such pleasant dreams as she watched the reflexions of the clouds in the waters of the Seine. . . . These visions of her girlhood she beheld once more for the last time one cold October day; her hands were tied, her locks cut short, and Samson's ill-omened tumbril was carrying her to the scaffold. From the corner of the *Quai de la Mégisserie* she cast a last farewell look at the surroundings of her happier days, as the melancholy procession, turning down the *Rue de la Monnaie*, made for the *Rue Saint-Honoré*, only to halt in the *Place de la Révolution*, at the foot of the guillotine, before the Statue of Liberty!

Leaving on one side the smaller arm of the river, where the heavy barges seem to lie asleep at their moorings alongside the *quais*, and which is closed in by the weir and sluice gates beside the *Monnaie*, fringed with a line of white foam, we follow the main stream that mirrors the tall pointed Towers of the *Conciergerie*. Under the combined attacks of rain, wind, dust and damp, a sort of black leprosy has spread in uneven patches over the old stones forming the sustaining wall of the *Quai de l'Horloge*, in front of the *Conciergerie* and the *Palais de Justice*. While some parts have whitened, others have darkened in diversified patterns and random streaks. A



Pont-Neuf and the Samaritaine

strange, indescribable effect is the result. Looking across from the *Quai de la Mégisserie* on the other side of the Seine, and half shutting one's eyes, it is quite easy, with the exercise of a little imagination, to conjure up a marvellous panorama of an Eastern city. Towers and castles and minarets rise up in orderly presentment, and the eye soon comes to make out clearly streets and squares and houses,—a whole architecture of phantasm emerges, a systematic plan develops. How often have we not,—a few sympathetic friends and I—amused ourselves with endless wanderings in this dream-city that lies outspread between the brink of the river and the parapet of the *Quai de l'Horloge*!

In front is the *Théâtre du Châtelet*, of which a friend said in conversation with Holstein, its first Manager, in 1862:—

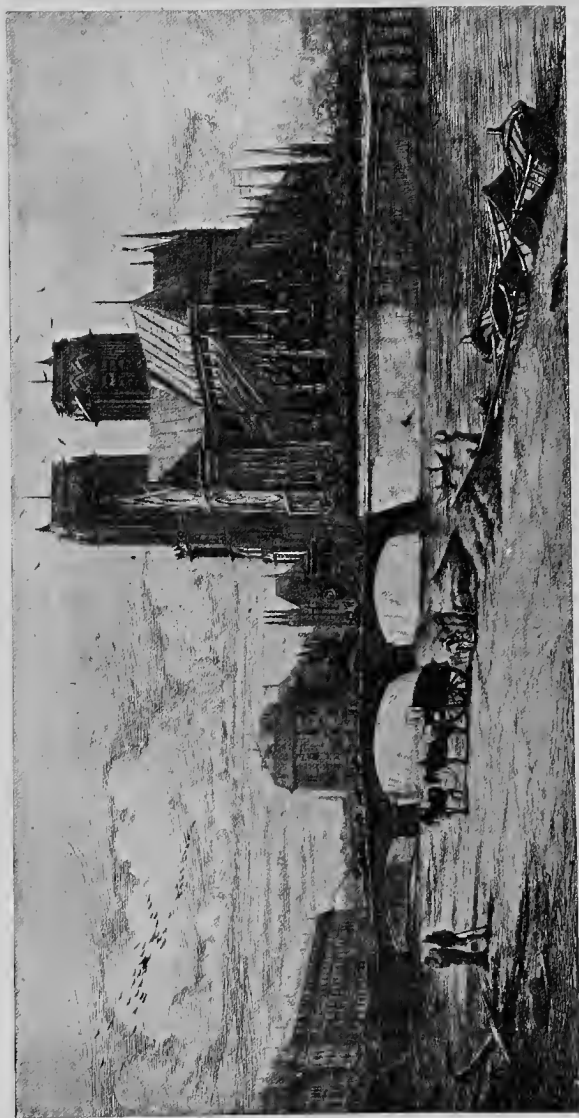
“What a unique position, to be sure! That enormous house to ruin you,—right opposite the *Tribunal de Commerce* to file your petition, the *Palais de Justice* close by to sentence you, and at your very feet the Seine to drown yourself in! . . . you might have searched far before finding anything better!”

In front of the Theatre, the gilded “Victory” which crowns Palmier's elegant fountain,—raised by Napoleon I. to the glory of the Army of Egypt,—stands out brilliantly against the purple mass of the *Tour Saint-Jacques*. Next we come to the charming group of poplars, weeping-willows and ashes which overshadows so prettily the little port nestling by the waterside close under the *Hôtel de Ville*. Successive *Préfets de la Seine* have made their name renowned in connexion with the great city. Baron Haussmann destroyed miracles of art, but he brought

light and air and health into countless haunts of physical and moral wretchedness, while MM. de Rambuteau and Poubelle see their memory linked indissolubly with the hygienic improvement of the capital; M. de Selves has chosen the graceful task of endowing Paris with refreshing shade; with consummate taste he offers the fair Parisiennes of to-day sweet bouquets of green leaves! While the engineers,—that Vandal horde—are mercilessly felling the old trees, that once made Paris the most delightful of gardens, M. de Selves, smiling and indefatigable, labours to repair their odious work, and thanks to him, the banks of the Seine will still preserve their incomparable girdle of greenery.

On our right, beyond the *Tribunal de Commerce*,—a vile square building, the heavy dome of which gives the idea of a captive balloon, the ugly zinc roofs of the *Marché-aux-Fleurs* and the gloomy grey walls of the *Hôtel Dieu* are a poor substitute for the old labyrinth of picturesque streets which once occupied all this part of the *Cité* and descended in happy confusion to the very water's edge. Before us the *Quai Bourbon* and the *Île Saint-Louis* seem evoked by some magician's wand, and behind us towers *Notre-Dame*; we sail between two entrancing visions.

The *Quais* on either hand, those famous quays where the *bouquinistes'* cases crown the parapets and the shady trees are full of twittering sparrows, roll past in stately procession. Boats crowded with passengers, tugs, barges, huge lighters pass us, while on the banks, beside the *Octroi* offices, the ports where the heavy traffic discharges, the bathing establishments, the floating pontoons gaudy with advertisements, some of the oddest people in Paris



Notre-Dame

practise a hundred queer trades. Here they clip poodles and shave longshoremen, card mattresses and deal in cigar-ends, and sell gentles to the indefatigable anglers who quarrel for the outlets of the most offensive sewers. Steve-dores, naked to the waist, cross with measured tread, carrying heavy loads, the frail planks that connect the cargo-boats with the shore; carters of sand look as if they were digging out cataracts of molten gold; women crowd in and out of the wash-houses. Drays are being loaded up and barrels rolled, the customs officers keeping watch on all this host of workers, while along the shores incorrigible loafers lie derelict, snoring in the sun.

Passing by the *Arcade Bretonvilliers* and the extreme point of the *Ile Saint-Louis*, we sail along the interminable *Halles aux Vins*,—"those catacombs of thirst".¹ To our left hand the *Pont de l'Estacade* cuts the Seine with its barrier of blackened beams, near the monument raised to the illustrious sculptor Barye by the love and loyalty of his admirers, on the very spot where that sublime artist, misunderstood, insulted, and in the power of his creditors, used to come at the twilight hour, sallying out from the *Jardin des Plantes* or his modest studio on the *Quai d'Anjou*, to forget his sorrows before the wondrous panorama of Paris,—the same fickle Paris, which a little later was to salute in him one of the most gifted masters of contemporary Art! . . .

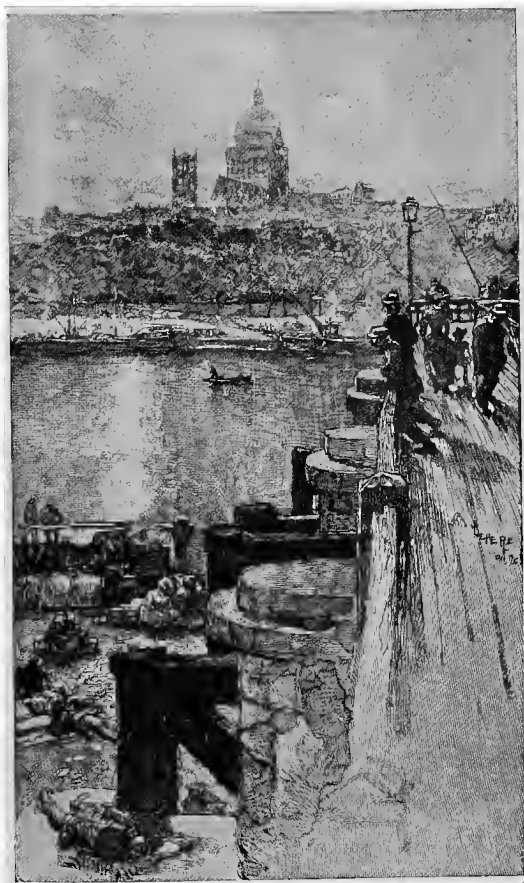
We will stop at the *Pont d'Austerlitz*, in front of the gates of the *Jardin des Plantes*, the old, delightful *Jardin des Plantes* of our childhood, fragrant with apple, plum and almond blossom. . . .

Yonder, in the far-off grey distances, is Bercy. Nearer

¹ E. and J. de Goncourt, *Manette Salomon*, vol. i.

at hand, tragic corollary of the great city so full of fevered desires and hates, covetousness and passion and madness, rises the black, gloomy dome of the Salpêtrière, which like a beacon of wretchedness and suffering, dominates all this melancholy district,—the Salpêtrière where they lock up, as Goncourt says, “the women who are madder than the rest”. Further away again looms Charenton, dedicated to the other sex!

But then, it would be a sad end to a most glorious trip, if the bright horizon, barred with trails of luminous smoke and flooded with sunbeams did not speak to us of joyous hope and happy work and radiant beauty!



Pont de l'Estacade

NOTRE-DAME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE PLACE DU PARVIS—THE RUE CHANOINESSE—THE
TOUR DAGOBERT

ON the 19th October, 1784, the *coche d'eau*, or public fly-boat, which in fifty hours conveyed passengers from Burgundy to the Capital, moored as usual alongside the quay of the *Port Saint-Paul*—the next up stream after the *Pont de la Tournelle*. Lost amid the throng of disembarking travellers, five young Provincials, under the escort of a Brother of the Order of St. Francis of Paul, stepped across the narrow plank connecting the boat with the shore, which was crowded with wayfarers, porters, boatmen, trunks, casks and lumber. They were five pupils from the Preparatory College of Brienne on their way to the Royal Military School at Paris to complete their studies and win the rank of officer. The smallest and slightest of the five lads was gazing with great startled eyes at the dazzling spectacle of this city of his dreams. Landing where he did, the first thing he saw was the twin towers of Notre-Dame,—the marvellous building where twenty years later, on 2nd December, 1804, Pope Pius VII., officiating in full pontifical state, surrounded by Cardinals, Bishops, Marshals, Generals, and all the great officers of the Body Politic, to the sound of salvoes of artillery and the clash of bells, was to stand before the great West Door, all gay with flags, patiently waiting

to receive the little Brienne schoolboy, now known as the Emperor Napoleon, and about to assume the crown of the ancient French Kings!

Notre-Dame¹ had changed and grown in the course of centuries just as Paris had.² The Pope Alexander III. had laid the first stone in 1163 above the ruins of two Chapels, Saint-Étienne and Sainte-Marie, themselves built originally on the site of a Temple dedicated by the Romans to Jupiter, as is proved by the remains of a stone altar, erected in the reign of Tiberius by the boatmen of Paris. The work was long and tedious, the building being still unfinished in 1247. Philippe le Bel entered the edifice on horseback in 1304, clad in half armour, without hauberk or leg-pieces, which he wore at *Mons-en-Puelle*, where he had triumphantly repulsed a furious night attack of the Flemings. An equestrian statue set up before the altar of the Virgin recalled the famous incident. All the notable events of French history have been commemorated in one way or another at

¹ *Notre-Dame de Paris* is one of the four supremely great Cathedral Churches of Northern France which illustrate the highest perfection of art in this the home-land of Gothic architecture, the other three being Chartres, Reims and Amiens. It is fully worthy to rank with these; yet at a first superficial view the exterior, or at any rate the western façade, is often found disappointing. This is due to several causes: the absence of spires, as originally intended, crowning the west towers, the extension of the old "parvis" into a vast *Place* surrounded by huge and lofty buildings, and the fact that the level of the ground before the west doors, which as late as 1748 were approached by thirteen steps, has been gradually raised to that of the floor of the Church.

Founded in 1163, the choir was consecrated in 1182, though the Western towers and nave were not completed before the beginning of the thirteenth century,—the great age of Church building. [Transl.]

² It was Bishop Maurice de Sully who first resolved to erect a single magnificent church on the ruins of the two others. Seconded by faith, zeal and genius, his enterprise was crowned with entire success in a relatively short space of time.—Abbé Duplessy (*Paris Religieux*).



Pont Marie

Notre-Dame.¹ Thither Henri IV. came on 22nd March, 1594, on the famous occasion when he spoke the historic words, "Paris is well worth a mass". He marched in grand procession; Vitry and d'O, who headed the cortège, had just had twenty-five or thirty rebels, incorrigible Ligueurs, pitched into the Seine. There was every cause for rejoicing! Thither Louis XIII., bursting with surprise and delight, hastened to thank Heaven for granting him an heir after twenty-three years of married life. There Louis XIV. celebrated all the victories won by his Generals, and the Maréchal de Luxembourg, after gathering in a bountiful harvest of the enemy's colours, earned the glorious nickname of *Tapissier de Notre-Dame*, "Decorator of Notre-Dame". On 10th March, 1687, Bossuet pronounced the funeral oration of the Great Condé. Louis XVI., Marie-Antoinette, Madame Elisabeth attended in 1784 to give thanks for the birth of a Dauphin. Then the Revolution broke out, but at first respected Notre-Dame. On 27th September, 1789, Claude Fauchet, in an impassioned oration, blessed all the flags of the National Guard massed about the High Altar. The Golden Age is still with us. But, after panegyrising the "God of all good Jacobins," after communicating with "tricoloured wafers,"

¹ Other notable events connected with the Cathedral Church of Paris are:—

10th August, 1239.—St. Louis brings the Crown of Thorns to Notre-Dame.

21st May, 1271.—Funeral of St. Louis.

10th April, 1302.—The first "States General" met at Notre-Dame.

17th November, 1431.—Henry VI. of England is crowned King of France.

4th April, 1560.—Coronation of Mary Stuart.

10th February, 1638.—Vow of Louis XIII.

23rd October, 1668.—Abjuration of Turenne.

Abbé Duplessy (*Paris Religieux*).

after writing in the 33rd Number of the *Lettres Patriotiques*,—"No, the Father of Mankind cannot be aristocrat; is not the rainbow that crowns his majestic head a fine, gay cockade of the Nation's colours?" after demanding the unlocking of the tabernacles in the churches,—“Our God must not be imprisoned, He must be as free as we are ourselves,”—after all this, the Revolution modified his opinions and the churches were closed for religious worship. Notre-Dame was dedicated to the cult of the Goddess of Reason, represented with much grace and dignity by Mme. Momoro, wife of the printer of that name, or Mlle. Maillard, of the Opéra.

On 10th November, 1793, there is a bonfire before the Great Doors of Breviaries, Missals, the Old and New Testaments; this done, the rabble pours into the Church,—to find an imposing *mise en scène*. In the nave rises a mountain crowned with a temple, on either side busts of philosophers, on the slope a rock supporting a circular altar on which burns the torch of Truth; two rows of young maidens sing round the Deity, and all present, “thrilled with emotion, take oath to be faithful to the Divinity.” But the triumph of Reason is, once again, short-lived, and her temple, at first let off to a master-cooper to store his empty casks in, remains closed down to 1802.

Since then the great Metropolitan Church has been associated with all the joys and sorrows, all the public festivals, of Paris, while its exterior aspect has altered hardly at all.¹

¹ 30th January, 1853.—Marriage of Napoleon III.

4th June, 1871.—Funeral of the victims of the Commune.

1st July, 1894.—Obsequies of President Carnot.

23rd February, 1899.—Obsequies of President Félix Faure.

Abbé Duplessy (*Paris Religieux*).

The same cannot be said of its surroundings. In former days Notre-Dame stood midway between two edifices symbolising Religion and Charity. The cloister occupied all the left flank of the Cathedral, of which it was an extension, with special access from the interior by the exquisite little *Porte Rouge*, still in existence; the Archbishop's Palace abutted on the right side. Under the Terror, it was used as an Infirmary for the female prisoners who were brought from the *Conciergerie* on account of sickness; above all, it was the place of detention of the wretched women who pleaded pregnancy in mitigation of immediate execution. The building, after being sacked again and again, finally disappeared in 1831.

Down to the year 1868 there lay in front of Notre-Dame a small Square or *Parvis*, restricted it may be in dimensions, but imposing in virtue of its surroundings. The vast buildings of the *Hôtel-Dieu*, the Archbishop's Palace, the erections appertaining to the church, formed a harmonious frame, a sort of vestibule, to the Cathedral, with their old grey stones. It was there the pomp of processions rolled on to the great West Door. Rosa Bonheur never forgot the deep impression she received as a girl at the sight of "Charles X. with his equine profile" heading the Royal Procession as it filed past the *Hôtel-Dieu* on the fête-day of St. Louis. He was accompanied by the Duchesse d'Angoulême, the Duchesse de Berry and all his Court. To the sound of chanting, the King advanced beneath the plumed canopy, the crown of France on his head, bearing the globe and sceptre with grave solemnity, wearing an ermine cloak with gold fleur-de-lys about his shoulders. He was escorted by ushers carrying on cushions the insignia of Royalty and the keys

of the city of Paris, while Lifeguardsmen, kneeling on one knee, lined the way.

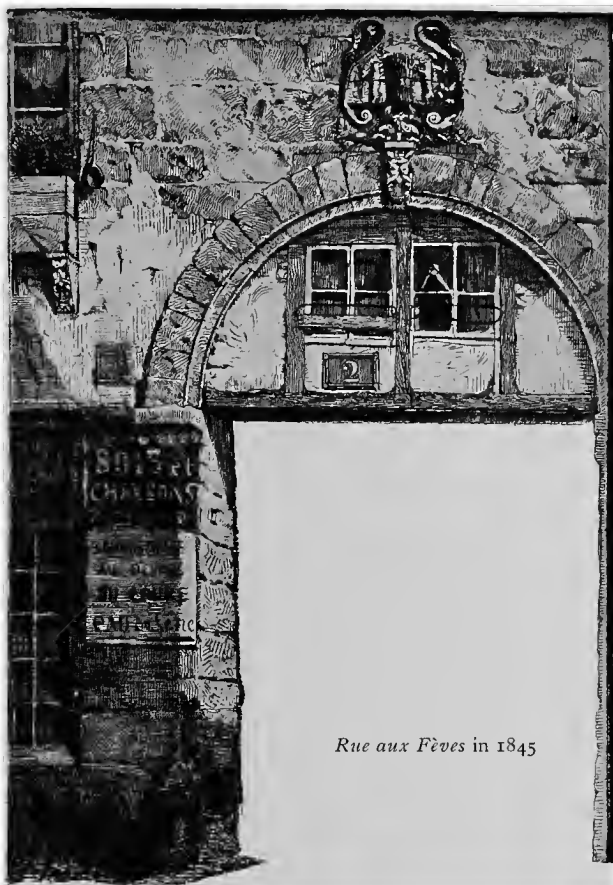
The whole charm of the little Square has been destroyed ; the *Place du Parvis* exists no more. To-day it is a vast Siberian steppe, icy-cold in winter, blazing-hot in summer, bounded on one side by the new *Hôtel-Dieu* that has more the air of a slaughter-house than anything else, and on the other by a meagre strip of garden from which emerges a heavy-looking statue of Charlemagne gazing with horror at the appalling ugliness of the barracks of the *Cité* which really baffles criticism. The old Hospital of the *Hôtel-Dieu*, which occupied the site of this garden, was of a sufficiently grim and forbidding aspect, and terrible legends were current about its deadly wards, where the sick were crowded so shockingly that the same bed would be made to hold four fever patients. We looked with terror at those black, ill-omened walls with their crumbling arcades and tumble-down oriels overhanging the Seine, forming that sordid but picturesque jumble of ruins of which Meryon has left us a record in a striking series of etchings.

The whole of the *Pointe Notre-Dame*, the eastern extremity of the *Île de la Cité*,—*Hôtel-Dieu*, Archbishop's Palace, Cloister,—rose straight from the waterside, without any intervening quays, so that its buildings and gardens, its windows and lights, were reflected in the stream. All about Notre-Dame was settled a population almost exclusively clerical, ecclesiastical, monastic ; priests, preachers, monks, choirmen, sacristans, filled not only the Cathedral itself, but also the ten little Chapels half-hidden under its prodigious bulk. We can imagine the deafening, metallic din of all the bells,—angelus, passing-bell, tocsin,



curfew,¹—and appreciate Boileau's lines on these disturbers of his quiet:—

Qui, se mêlant au bruit de la grêle et des vents,
Pour honorer les morts font mourir les vivants.²



Rue aux Fèves in 1845

¹ Hence Rabelais' name for the *Cité*,—"L'Île Sonnante." [Transl.]

² "Which, mingling with the rattle of the hail and bluster of the winds, to honour the dead, are the death of the living."

Yet, a little further, on the ground now occupied by the *Marché au Fleurs* and the *Hôtel-Dieu*, and we reach the site of many haunts of old-time frolic,—the *Glatigny*, or *Val d'Amour*, the *Rue aux Fèves* where Eugène Sue locates the horrible thieves'-kitchen of his *Mystères de Paris*, the *Rue de la Licorne*, in which lurked the famous cabaret of the *Pomme de Pin*, renowned by Rabelais "amongst the deserving taverns haunted by the scholars of Paris". There Villon declaimed the charms of "Blanche the cobbler's daughter" and the rare good points of the "buxom sausage-seller at the corner". The *Rue des Trois-Canettes*, the *Rue de la Calandre* and the *Rue Cocatrix* completed this labyrinth of alleys of "high-spiced odour" and dubious reputation.

What is left of this highly picturesque bit of old Paris? In the *Rue Massillon*, facing a hideous modern house, is the entrance at No. 6 to a small interior Courtyard, damp and ill-paved. The building has a grim, cross-grained, Provincial look; crossing the court and diving down an echoing stone passage, you discover a massive staircase of carved oak of the days of Henri IV. Small ragamuffins coming back from school, bustling housewives loaded with parcels, climb the steps where once elegant cavaliers swept the floor with their plumes and roused the echoes with their clattering spurs. The penetrating odour of a red-herring grilling over a petroleum stove succeeds the savoury fumes of rich repasts once cooked with pious care in honour of stout and wealthy Princes of the Church.

Following the *Rue Massillon* we soon reach the *Rue Chanoinesse*, made famous by Balzac. When he selected

this street as the dwelling-place of Mme. de La Chanterie the great novelist found the precise setting most appro-



Rue Chanoinesse

priate for his dubious heroine ; Mme. de La Chanterie was in fact Mme. de Combray, that most irrepressible of conspirators, mother of another amazing personage, Mme.

Acquet, guillotined at Rouen in the *Place du Vieux-Marché* on 6th October, 1809; "dressed in a huzzar's jacket,"¹ she had borne a hand in the attempted robbery of the mail conveying the Government moneys! As a matter of fact Mme. de Combray never lived in Paris; but Balzac has so ingeniously interwoven in his story the localities connected with this strange old figure living a recluse life made up of dreams and memories of the past, that the *Rue Chanoinesse* is as it were impregnated with associations of her doings.²

At the date of the great reconstructions which, towards the end of the Second Empire, gutted the whole Quarter, the *Rue Chanoinesse* was almost entirely spared.³ Closely shut in, narrow and winding, it gives us a very good idea of what these damp, silent streets were that lay drowned beneath the vast shadows of the Cathedral. The houses are grey and gloomy, though one or two old mansions of the seventeenth century, in which a few scattered tradesmen have installed their businesses, strike a note of life

¹ G. Lenôtre, *Tournebut* (Perrin, éditeur).

² By a happy coincidence M. André Hallays, the eminent historian, wrote only the other day: "No sooner are you set down in a town which Balzac has made the scene of one of his romances than you inevitably start on the discovery of the quarters he has described, the houses where he has lodged his characters, and supposing you light upon an old inhabitant, you feel bound to ask him if he knew as a boy the personages created by the writer. Indeed you are convinced these individuals existed somewhere else than in Balzac's brain. It is a diverting sport, not involving the smallest risk to Balzac's fame,—quite the contrary."—*Journal des Débats*: "En flânant," 12th October, 1906.

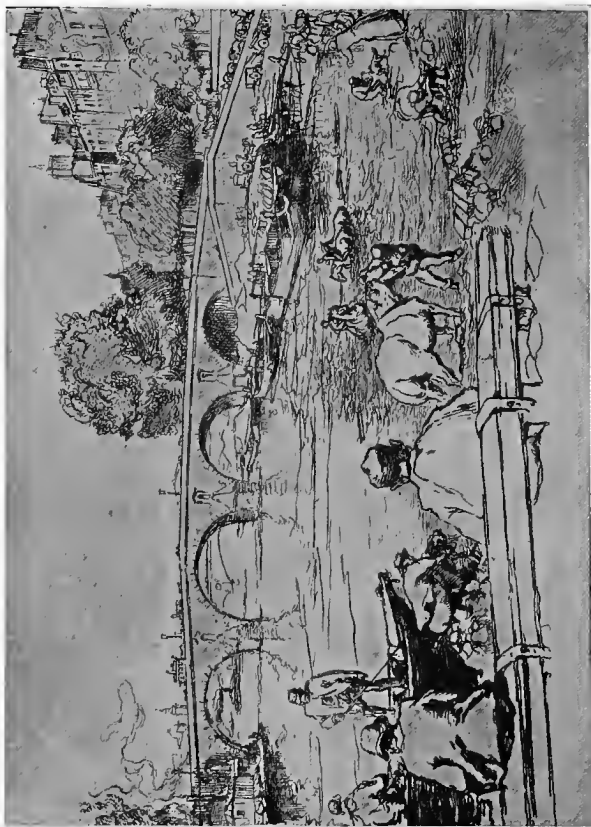
³ The *Rue Chanoinesse* has other associations as well. The learned M. de Rochegude in his *Guide pratique à travers le vieux Paris* (Practical Guide through Old Paris) notes: "The Cardinal de Retz lived, it is said, at No. 17.—No. 16, site of Racine's house.—14, Bichat's house.—10, site of the house where Fulbert lived, terrible uncle of Héloïse,—Abailard's Héloïse."

amidst these old-world surroundings. If we enter No. 18, we shall find one of the most important industrial concerns in Paris has established its stores there. The glazed courtyard is half blocked with agricultural implements, tables, chairs, garden-seats. At the far end is a low-browed door, giving access to a little Gothic tower of the fifteenth century, the *Tour Dagobert*.

Climb the stairway of uneven bricks which leads to a narrow platform, and you will enjoy one of the most wonderful sights imaginable. Within a few yards of where we stand, still within range of the hum of voices, the noises and cries of a great city, shutting out Paris with its stony mass, vast and ravishingly beautiful, Notre-Dame rises from amid a confusion of low roofs, black, grey or grey-blue. The outlines of its twin towers show majestically against the sky. Crockets and carvings, angles of masonry and outstanding turrets, catch the light, which seems to star the old Cathedral Church of Paris with points of golden splendour. In between the buttresses we get peeps of far-off blue sky, faint and fugitive. Flights of crows wheel screaming round the slim spire and over the decorated ridge-tiles of the roofs, while the strange monsters of the Apocalyptic vision which the carvers of an older day have perched on the stone balustrades of the western towers, crane their grotesque heads and mocking faces over the mighty city that lives its eager life far below.

It is a dazzling panorama of carved cornices, gable-ends, chimneys, bridges, streets, green clumps of trees. The outlines grow vague and indefinite on the horizon-line, where the Panthéon, the towers of Saint-Sulpice and Sainte-Clotilde are the conspicuous landmarks. In the

other direction the Seine glitters in the sun, a restless streak of flashing silver. Its waters are churned by the steam-tugs and *bateaux-mouches*, furrowed by the keels of



Port aux Pommes

barges and boats, to where in the distance the eye can make out the great lighters laden with apples or millstones and covered in with huge grey tarpaulins, which lie alongside the *Port aux Pommes*

.

Leaving the quaint *Tour Dagobert*, and taking the *Rue de la Colombe*,—along which once went the ancient Gallo-Roman wall encircling the *Cité*,—we will end our day with a visit to the ruins of the *Chapelle Saint-Aignan*, No. 19 *Rue des Ursins*, an obscure sanctuary founded in the twelfth century by the Archdeacon Étienne de Garlande; St. Bernard is said to have preached there. Under the Terror it was a harbour of refuge for the pious; there recalcitrant priests, in all sorts of odd disguises,—working masons, itinerant wine-sellers, National guards, costermongers, old clothes'-men, street-porters, used to say mass to numbers of the faithful whom neither Fouquier-Tinville's "beaters" nor the myrmidons of the Revolutionary Committees could terrify.

A few steps to the right brings us to the *Marché aux Fleurs*. Bunches of gilliflowers, hyacinths, pansies, lilies of the valley, are piled along the dull grey parapets; the pretty sweet-smelling flowers seem heaped—as for an offering—at the foot of the old *Tour Dagobert*, from which we can get so strange a view of that unparalleled wonder—Paris.

AT THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE

THE COUR DU MAI—THE BUVETTE DU PALAIS

UNDER an arched gateway, behind heavy iron bars, to the right of the main entrance of the *Palais de Justice*, cowering beneath the masses of the monumental stairway that leads up to the great doors, lies a little square courtyard, damp and dark, sunk below the level of the *Cour du Mai*, with which it communicates by nine steps. Only a few years ago the broad flags with which it was laid were still covered with the greenish coating of moss and lichen, and rimmed with the stains of moisture and mildew,—the sort of paving we see in deserted cloisters; it was a gloomy, almost funereal place. A low door, dingy, worm-eaten and dilapidated, guarded by double iron gates, half-eaten away with rust, could be discerned in the background, always hermetically closed. An iron balustrade, dating from Louis XVI., bordered the well-worn steps. The few who were aware what awful tragedies this courtyard, so rich in terrible associations, had witnessed, sometimes came with hearts of ruth and respect to indulge in long day-dreams within the stone walls of the narrow enclosure.

In the gloomy days of the Terror it was the wicket of the *Conciergerie*, and the only one at that time!

Then, at half-past nine in the morning, the hour

of the opening of the Revolutionary Tribunal, the top of the wall overlooking this sunk courtyard would be lined by a howling, vociferating crowd of men and



Cour du Mai

women,—more women than men, who came, as to a play, to take station on the steps of the Great Stairway of the *Palais*, which afforded so convenient a coign of vantage

for viewing the drama that was daily enacted at the Prison gate.

Bursts of fierce laughter and shouts of delight greeted the appearance of the *fiacres* conveying the prisoners to be 'locked up, while the "watch-dogs of the guillotine" and "tricoteuses" from the Revolutionary clubs gazed hungrily at the unhappy wretches as they drove up



Entrance Gate of the *Conciergerie* under the Revolution

escorted by police officers, pikemen seated by the coachman's side, representatives of Committees, underlings of Fouquier-Tinville's. On the other hand, the throng loudly acclaimed jurymen who "voted straight," "file-firers," men like Trinchard, Villate, the *ci-devant* Marquis d'Antonnelle or the Antoine Roussillon who used to subscribe himself without more ado as "Roussillon, purveyor to the guillotine!"

But the great sensation of the day was in the afternoon, towards half-past three, when the tumbrils arrived. How many to-day? was the question; and great was the disappointment when only two or three drew up. It was a matter of common knowledge that every morning the headsman Samson, anticipating the hearing, was in the habit of going for his orders to the Public Accuser, who, actually before judgment was delivered, indicated, plying his toothpick the while, the number who were to "go down yonder that day". "Down yonder" meant the guillotine, and the tumbrils at twenty francs a piece—five francs being for *pourboire*—were ordered accordingly.

About four o'clock, the condemned filed out one by one through the grey door, surrounded by gaolers, gendarmes, ushers of the *Palais* and headsman's assistants. All, men and women alike, had their hair cut short in readiness and their hands bound behind their backs. Their fevered eyes, red with weeping, weak from the prison gloom, could hardly bear the dazzling light of day. They staggered and blanched under the insults, the jeers, the foul words, that were hurled at them from every mouth. This was how the unhappy creatures, going to their death, had to cross this ill-omened Yard and climb the steep steps, at the top of which Samson stood waiting for them in front of his tumbrils drawn up at the barred entrance. There it was the headsman, almost always dressed in a long-skirted brown coat and wearing a bulging high-crowned hat, identified his victims from the lists of death which he held in his hand, before binding them to the rails or tying them down on the benches, faces to the crowd which escorted the victims to the place of execution.

All the condemned of all parties, Marie-Antoinette no less than Mme. Roland, Charlotte Corday and the Abbess de Montmorency, Cécile Renaud smiling and the



Conciergerie and Pont d'Arcole

Dubarry sobbing and dishevelled, Danton, Robespierre, the Girondists, the vile Hébert and the virtuous Malesherbes,

the Maréchal de Noailles and Camille Desmoulins, the bravest, the noblest, the maddest, all trod these flagstones, passed out through that terrible gate. And this spot, the most tragic, the most pathetic, in all the Titanic drama of the Revolution, is to-day nothing more than the vestibule of the "*Buvette du Palais*," a cheap restaurant where lawyers lunch!

The place looks like a suburban wine-shop; shrubs in green boxes, rhododendrons and spindlewoods, alternating with tin-topped tables painted yellow, are ranged with a foolish primness down the grim courtyard where the flagstones of 1793 have been replaced by an asphalt floor. The whole thing is vulgar, ugly, odious; gone the narrow casements lighting on the left hand the Office of Registry and on the right the Turnkey's lodge, that antechamber of death where so many human beings have known the agony of impending dissolution; thrown on the scrap-heap the bars and grated doors to which so many illustrious victims have clung; destroyed the door of the famous Prison, the chief gaol of the Great Revolution,—the door where the Queen felt so keen a stab of pain when she caught sight of the tumbril and its white horse, when her pride had expected the grace of being carried to her death in the coach of Louis XVI.,—the door where Mme. Roland's dress caught. Now, renewed and repainted, with varnished panels and inlet mirrors, it opens upon a commonplace café-restaurant, duly provided with telephone, drinking-bar and *déjeuners à prix fixe*!

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It was there that we met the other morning, at the invitation of one of the best-known members of our Bar; and there, amid these prosaic surroundings, we evoked

with feelings of tender, almost religious awe, the agonising scenes of other days. . . . Through the blue haze of cigar smoke we could see the wrought-iron rail of the steps which Marie-Antoinette, "in a thread cap without streamers or any sign of mourning," ascended on the 16th October, 1793, about half-past ten in the morning; "she sighed as she raised her eyes to heaven, but kept back her tears, which were ready to flow". Her last Lady of the Wardrobe was Rosalie Lamorlière, cook to the Turnkey Richard's wife, a humble servant-girl who used to say afterwards: "I left her without daring to say my goodbyes or make a single curtsy, for fear of compromising or distressing her".¹

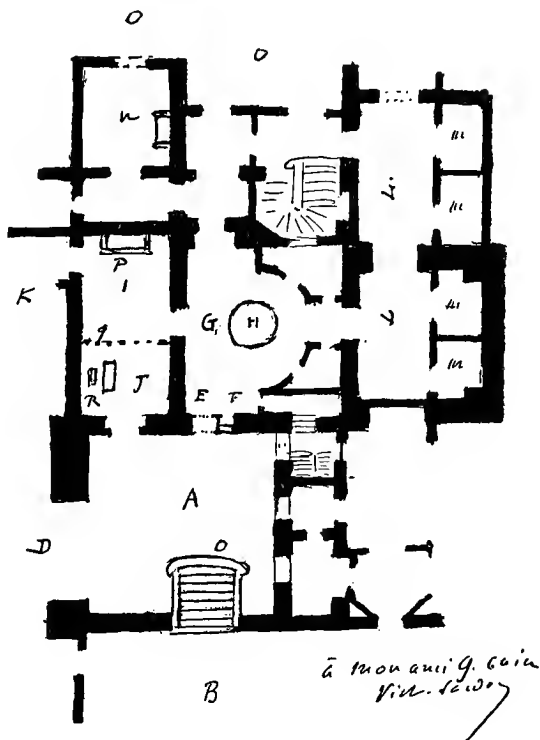
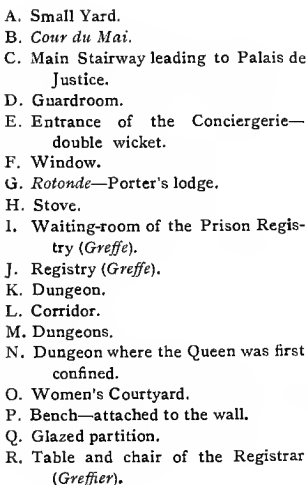
Customers' hats and barristers' *toques* are hung up along the walls which once were lined with the pigeon-holes in which were piled the clothes and belongings, the poor memorials of the victims of the guillotine. We sat on lounges upholstered in padded American cloth occupying the spot where the wooden bench stood, clamped to the wall, on which the condemned were put to wait their turn for the "toilet". This "toilet" was performed where now

¹ In the curious *Mémoires de l'Internonce à Paris pendant la Révolution*, Monseigneur de Salamon relates that this Richard, the Turnkey, was full of humane consideration for him. ". . . You shall have a stove in your room and you shall sleep on that poor woman's two mattresses, —he meant the Queen,—who died on the scaffold. . . . They cost me dear enough; I had six months of prison at the *Madelonnettes* for buying them. . . .

"One morning, when my door opened, I saw a pug-dog run into the room, jump up on my bed, sniff it over and scamper off. It was the Queen's dog, which Richard had adopted and treated with the greatest kindness. It came like that to examine the mattresses its mistress had used. I saw him do the same thing every morning at the same hour for three whole months, and despite all my efforts I could never put my hands on the little creature."—*Mémoires de Mgr. de Salamon*, pp. 280, 281.

a stove of japanned metal supports an imitation china vase
of imitation flowers!

Otherwise this commonplace eating-room, vulgarised as it all is, still preserves the old ground-plan and arrange-



Plan of the *Conciergerie*

ment of 1793. At that time it formed two rooms, divided by an open partition. The first, on the right, communicated directly with the prison by a wicket-door now replaced by an *étagère* littered with apples and pears, saucers and mustard-pots and hams in cut ; this was the Turnkey's

lodge. The second, on the left, cut in two by a row of wooden bars, formed the *greffe* or office for registering the prisoners. Beside the window were stationed the officers in front of their registers; at the far end, with the "Constitutional" priests on duty in attendance, the condemned, their hair cropped and their hands tied behind, waited their summons to mount the tumbrils. Thus new arrivals, while the formalities of their admission were being completed, were able to exchange a few words with the victims ready for the scaffold!

In his invaluable *Mémoires*, the Comte Beugnot draws us a picture of this "living tomb," of the "mattresses spread on the floor where the wretches who were to die next day spent their last night on earth;" here he saw them "stripped of their clothes, their necks made ready for the knife, but steadfast, full of scorn for all who came near them, doing their best to show a proud, contemptuous bearing."¹ It was in the room on the right, called the rotunda because of a semi-circular partition-wall on the opposite side of it, that the baskets were stacked in which the heads of hair, blond, brown or white, accumulated as they were cut off by the executioner's men under the superintendence of his factotum Desmorets. Thither the hairdressers of the *Cité*

¹ "To aggravate the torture yet further, a staircase leading to one of the halls of the *Palais de Justice* (I am not sure which) adjoins the wall of the Infirmary. Evidently the stairs lead to one of the Courts of the Revolutionary Tribunal, for from five o'clock in the morning any of the sick prisoners who were able to sleep were woke up with a start by the uproar coming from the amateurs of sensation hurrying and crushing and fighting to secure the best places. This horrid disturbance, agitating for more than one reason, was repeated every day and went on far into the morning. Thus the first sensation that struck an invalid on his awaking was the dread it might be for the pleasure of gloating over his last moments that they were struggling over his head! . . ." *Souvenirs de 1793.—Mémoires du Comte Beugnot*, vol. i., p. 191; *ib.*, pp. 205, 206.

and the *Ile Saint-Louis* came to turn over the contents, weighing and valuing the shorn locks, making up a quotation for the day, as it were, the figure of which varied according to the quantity of the article offered for sale. . . . Towards the end of the Terror, in the days of the "big batches," the supply so far exceeded the demand that the price fell to zero!

Nowadays in this same vaulted hall magistrates, attorneys, advocates take their lunch, the majority in bands and gowns. Everybody is pressed for time and asks hurriedly for the *plat du jour*; to-day it is a stew with a fine *Méridional* aroma about it. Men smoke and laugh and argue, prophesy so and so will get off and swap good stories. . . . "Yes, comes on next week—Poincaré against Millerand, it'll be worth hearing!" . . . "Worth hearing! say worth going a hundred miles to hear!"—A sucking barrister bursts in like a whirlwind: "Quick! quick's the word! it's twelve o'clock and Chenu is up in the First Court, I wouldn't miss it. . . ."

Grave-faced jurymen, more solemn than any magistrate, are there with their wives and children, who have come to see them in the exercise of their judicial functions and look deeply awed. Paterfamilias points out the celebrities of the Law; with wondering eyes they watch Henri-Robert absorb two cups of tea before going up to the Assize Court, and stare their fill at Pierre Baudin, Maurice Bernard, Décori, Michel Pelletier, Vonoven, Brizard, while the moustachio'd waiters pass along the dishes with frantic haste. . . . "Hurry up! the *camembert* to M. le Président!" . . . "A pear for the Magistrate sitting in No. 4."—"Counsel want their coffee, quick-step there, come!" Silhouettes à la *Daumier* of lawyers' heads, with long

bodies attached, great bundles of papers under their arms, show up black against the light of the windows. Barristers wag their square-cornered *toques* at each other; brief orders and urgent messages are given and received; excuses are muttered—"The fellow's more of a fool than a knave, I tell you,"—"Poor devil! I do assure you the whole thing's his wife's fault!"

Peals of ringing laughter rise from the groups of young law-students and re-echo from the vaulted roof, under which so many heart-breaking farewells have been exchanged, while the habitués of the Courts, registrars and ushers and clerks play interminable games of bridge and backgammon on the very spot where, behind a table encumbered with prison-registers, was installed the arm-chair occupied by Richard, the Head Turnkey of the *Conciergerie*, a person of no little importance and notoriety! From thence he exercised his anxious surveillance and pointed out the newcomers to his subordinate door-keepers and gaolers: "Smoke the griffin!" he would call out in his masterful voice; the order would be passed on from mouth to mouth, and then everybody proceeded to stare his hardest—so as to know him again—at the "griffin," in other words at the unhappy wretch who had just been registered as an inmate of the Prison.

Friends and relations of the prisoners used to beseech the gaolers' kind offices near the window where in our day beginners try to get a good notice for themselves in the papers and a few tame cats, prowling for scraps under the tables bear a far-away—a very far-away—resemblance to the savage dogs which used to come and examine and sniff about the new arrivals, whose safe-keeping they shared with the gaolers. . . . It is indeed a thing to

move one strangely to call up, as you sit in the little noisy, bustling café, the tragic memory of all the unfortunate beings who have tasted of the bitterness of death within these walls! You cannot help asking yourself how it comes that in our enlightened days such a locality,—a place that should surely have been held sacred by men of all parties without exception, has been thus shamefully altered and profaned without any protest being raised at so odious and brutal an act of vandalism and sacrilege!

THE DÉPÔT OF THE PRÉFECTURE DE POLICE

AT THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE

THERE are many different ways of entering the Dépôt of the *Préfecture de Police*, the commonest and least desirable being to come in between a couple of *Gardes Municipaux*. We think we may boast to have selected the best when we asked Maître Henri-Robert, the eminent Advocate, to introduce us. We had agreed to meet at Mme. Bosc's, the robing-room so familiar to all frequenters of the Courts, and (to use a hackneyed phrase) "one of the few remaining *salons* where you can still hear good talk". No vain display of luxury here; three small, low-browed rooms, cramped and crowded with overcoats, bundles of papers, walking sticks, umbrellas and hats; hanging on pegs along the walls, hundreds of barristers' gowns, creased and black and serious-looking, and on a shelf a row, an endless, everlasting row of barristers' *toques*. The place has been an institution for generations, and is one of the most familiar pieces of mechanism about the *Palais de Justice*; all practising at the Bar, young or old, famous veterans or young recruits, have their correspondence—professional, official and "festive," addressed here; naughty notes in pale blue envelopes lie pell-mell with horrid yellow packets bursting with law papers. Mme. Bosc's is the sanctuary where neo-

phytes come to don their first "toga," and the worthy lady bestows on each a nice, clean pair of bands and an encouraging smile; it is their initiation into the temple of Themis.¹

To-day the *Palais* wears an air of unwonted excitement; conspirator-like groups collect in dark corners, and brief rallying words are passed on in a whisper—*Ad augusta per augusta*. It is the election of members of the Administrative Council of the Bar. What more coveted honour than to be chosen by one's fellows, one's professional comrades and companions in work? Advocates have a just appreciation of the high dignity of their status and quite realise the importance of their votes. So the candidates are many, the vacancies few. The great guns' secretaries are beating up backward voters, encouraging waverers, rebuking backsliders; yesterday's elected candidates are haranguing on the claims of their colleagues of to-morrow, while the elbowing crowd of black gowns squeezes through the narrow gallery of the *Première Présidence*, where the voting urns stand.

The witty and agreeable *Bâtonnier*, or President of the Council, Maître Chenu, comes storming out like a whirlwind, very red in the face and panting. . . . "I can stand no more; it is two o'clock and I'm dying of hunger. . . ." Maîtres Léon Renault, Ployer, Edmond Le Berquier, Brizard, Albert Danet, Martini, Décori, are the centres of imposing groups of sympathisers. Maître Cruppi, cigar in mouth, much sought after and in the highest spirits, leaves us to slip on his gown: "Wait for

¹ Since the date when this was written (18th July, 1906), the "*vestiaire Bosc*" has been amalgamated with the second robing-room, the "*vestiaire Muller*," which under the same conditions fulfilled identical functions.

me a moment, I've got to vote, then we will go and explore the old *Palais*". Maitres Michel Pelletier, Georges Claretie, André Hesse and Tézenas are laughing and chatting with Maitres Villard and Audouin, those "eminently Parisian" *avoués*, while the students eagerly scan the seven notices stuck up on the wall showing the results of the first ballots.



Gate of the *Dépôt de la Préfecture de Police*

Quitting the busy ant-hill, we go upstairs, then downstairs, then along passages, then through endless underground corridors lighted after dark by electric globes and in the day time by loopholes dating from the sixteenth century. At length we reach the "*Petit Parquet*"; there the affable and learned M. Soubeyran de Saint-Prix, the *juge d'instruction*,

is so obliging as to constitute himself our cicerone.

Our little band hurries through the long galleries of the *Dépôt*, on which the subterranean corridors open. In

the gloom of the barred cells flashing eyes light up as we go by, nervous hands grip the iron bars, and in these keen glances, so full of supplication and anxious suspense, in these gestures of caged wild beasts, one can divine whole dramas of bitterness and hate and fear. But the well-known figure of Henri-Robert and the gigantic form of his excellent Secretary, Albert Dussart, reassure the poor wretches, whose eyes grow softer and less haggard. . . . In front of us is a door surmounted by an inscription that tears at the heart-strings: *Lost or deserted children*,—surely the worst of all the unhappy plights that find refuge under this melancholy roof!

In the tiny garden that blooms between four gloomy walls we come across a pale slip of a child, a little girl with dark blue eyes; timid looking and resigned, she is waiting for her mother, who “is to be discharged directly”. What pathos in the words! We glance at each other with tears in our eyes, the little maid standing there smiling, still full of delight at the kind treatment she has received. By the paternal solicitude of the *Préfet de Police*, so gentle-hearted to the quite little ones, she has a new pair of boots, pretty toys and a pocket-handkerchief, a real pocket-handkerchief, of real linen, which she brandishes as a trophy. . . . We pass through this shelter of unfortunate childhood, where the hands of gentle and charitable women have been at pains to hide the wretchedness that rings it round. Polichinelle presides over a dormitory where ten little cots are ranged in a row, and Guignol has his stage and gallows on a chimney-piece, where a regiment of tin soldiers stands ready to march and counter-march. . . .

We return to the *Palais* itself by the same subterranean ways which extend for more than 200 yards, meeting

prisoners passing to and fro under guard ; in fact the traffic is incessant, a constant coming and going between the *Dépôt* and the "*Petit Parquet*". Then we emerge suddenly into the corridors where the election is still going on at fever heat. What will be the result of the voting ? This is the subject of endless argument and discussion, and we catch a glimpse of a couple of "big-wigs" at it tooth and nail, with flashing eyes and gnashing teeth. . . . Then comes a round of hurrahs: "Victory! victory! Maurice Bernard is elected!"

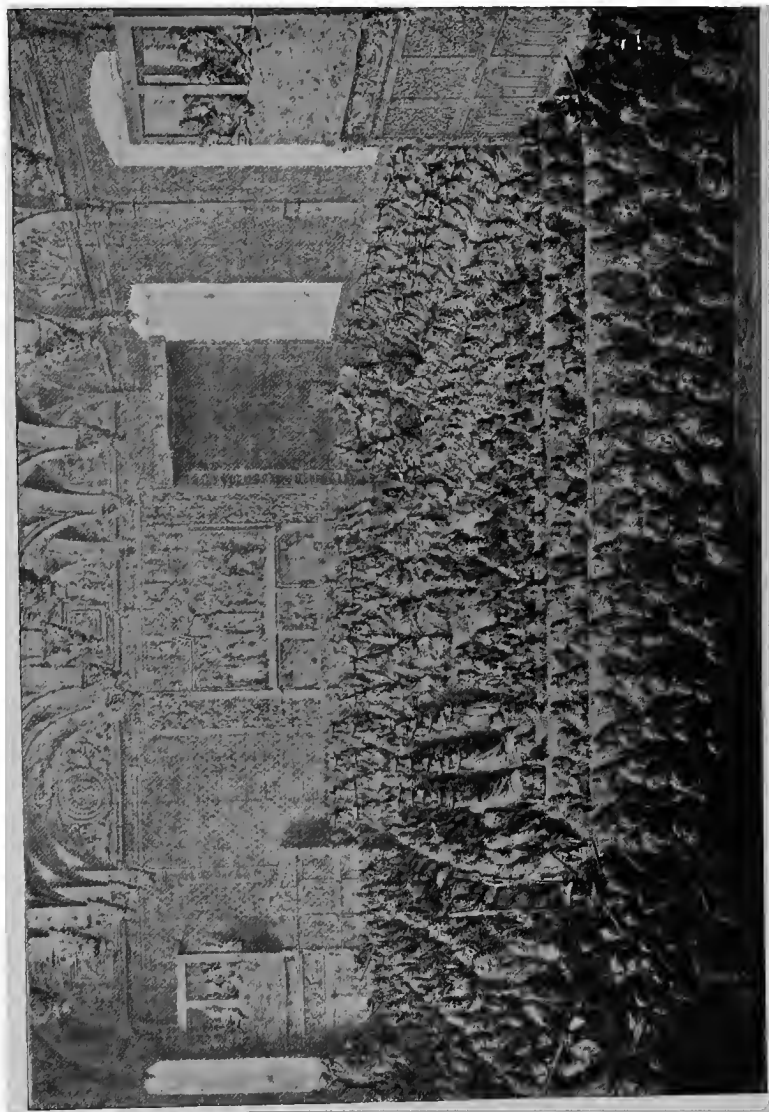
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Maitre Cruppi, who had gone "to arrange a little compromise before the President of the Tribunal," now returns to take us in tow and do the honours of the old *Palais* he knows so well. Once more we traverse a series of devious passages which bring us eventually to the *Première Chambre de la Cour*. Situated between the two pointed Round Towers facing the *Quai de l'Horloge*, from which it is separated only by a room for consultations, this was formerly the "Gilded Chamber," the *Grand'Chambre* of the Parlement of Paris. Built under Louis XII., it boasted a panelled ceiling "gilt with gold as fine as the metal of Dutch ducats"; the walls were hung with blue velvet sprinkled with "gold fleurs-de-lys in high relief"; tall stained-glass windows admitted "only a half light reflecting the richest hues ; at the end of the hall was a great painting with texts of Holy Scripture underneath the crucifix".

It has been the scene of all that is most noteworthy in French History! François I. held a "bed of justice" there ; the Maréchal de Biron was condemned to death there ; it was there, in 1614, that the Parlement proclaimed

the majority of Louis XIII. On 16th August, 1655, Louis XIV., galloping in hot-foot from Vincennes, entered the *Grand'Chambre* booted and spurred, in full hunting costume. He took up his position under the Royal canopy, which stood permanently in the left corner of the hall, and peremptorily ordered the House to register the decrees "without discussing them for the future". This done, he marched out, and was never seen again in the *Palais* during all the sixty years of his reign.¹ By the irony of events, in the same hall where this exhibition of arbitrary force had been given, was held, on 12th September, 1715, the "bed of justice" at which was annulled the will of the *Roi-Soleil* in favour of the legitimated Princes. The little Louis XV., a child of five, but already "decorative," presided over the assembly, seated on cushions patterned with the Royal fleurs-de-lys, under the care of his *gouvernante*, Mme. de Ventadour,—at his feet the Regent, the Dukes and Peers of France, the Parlement. . . . Under Louis XVI. it becomes the scene of endless wrangling and fighting; the Revolution really began in the *Palais*.

In 1791 comes a complete transformation; a flat ceiling hides the elaborate panel-work of Louis XII., while the "unconstitutional" coats of arms are erased from the walls, the "monarchical" hangings torn down, the clerical emblems removed, the canopy of the "bed of justice" given to the flames! The ancient "Gilded Chamber" becomes (10th March, 1793) the "Revolutionary Tribunal," the republican architects having made it into a great, gloomy, melancholy hall,—the *Salle d'Égalité*.

¹ " *La Grand'Chambre*,"—scene of Louis XIV.'s " *L'État, c'est moi* " ("The State! I am the State"), pronounced on this same occasion. [Transl.]



"Bed of Justice" held 12th September, 1715

At the end, in the middle of the wall, the bust of Socrates, flanked a little later by those of Marat and Lepelletier. The President sits underneath, on a raised platform, with his back to the river; on his right the jury, on his left, crowded on rising tiers of benches, the accused,—and what a host they were! . . . All the noblest of old France, Dukes, Marshals, Bishops, Princes, Charlotte Corday, the Girondins, Mme. Roland, have, in hundreds, undergone the mockery of a trial before departing for the *Place de la Révolution* or the *Barrière-Renversée*. It was indeed the ante-chamber to the guillotine. Dumas, Hermann or Coffinhall sit in the President's chair, while Fouquier-Tinville prosecutes, attired in long black coat, on his head a broad felt à la *Henri IV.* with black plumes waving above a great tricolour cockade. All wear round the neck, by ribands of the same universal tricolour, medals emblematic of their functions as judge or public accuser, and through the open windows on the President's left hand can be seen the conical roof of the *Tour de l'Horloge*.

Here it was that, on 14th October, 1793, at daybreak, the "Widow Capet" was called up for trial. The Queen of France had been duly brought from her dungeon into Court. Hermann was presiding judge; among the jury were: Deydier, locksmith, Grenier-Trey, tailor, Gannay, wigmaker, Jourdeuil, ex-sheriff's officer, Trinchard, cabinet-maker, Chatelet, painter, Antonelle, ex-Marquis. Fouquier, his cruel eyes gleaming under his bushy black eyebrows, fulminated his accusations against the prisoner, whom he compared to "Messalina, Fredegond, Marie de Médicis. . . ." But it was reserved to Hébert, vilest of the vile, to bring

out the Queen's noble bearing into still more marked relief by his attempt to vilify her with infamous and unnatural charges. . . . The proceedings, beginning at eight in the morning, went on without a break till four in the afternoon; after an hour's adjournment they were resumed, only to end at four o'clock next morning. Except for one brief respite, the trial lasted therefore twenty consecutive hours!¹

The night sitting was gloomy in the extreme; a few faithful souls alone remained, mingled with the furies and "watch-dogs of the guillotine," to see out the "last moments of expiring Royalty". The quiet was disturbed only by the passage of messengers who every quarter of an hour carried detailed reports to Robespierre of all that occurred in this long-drawn agony. . . . At last, by the dim light of smoking lamps, sentence was pronounced, and the gendarmes cleared the court, while Marie-Antoinette was led back to her dungeon in the *Conciergerie*,—by the little door which can still be seen at the present day beside the stove, on the left. She was to be guillotined at a quarter after noon; Fouquier threw himself, in his clothes, on a camp bed, while the harassed jurymen waited for daylight round a supper ordered beforehand at the cookshop within the precincts of the *Palais*! . . .

What tragic memories centre round the place! how many unhappy men and women have come here to taste the bitterness of imminent death! Yet there is absolutely

¹ "While her fate was being weighed in the balance, Marie-Antoinette kept moving her fingers over the arm of her chair, in apparent absence of mind, as if she had been playing the piano."—*Hist. Parlementaire*, vol. xxix., p. 409.

1637.

Paris, le 24. du 1. mois de
l'an 2.^e de la République Française,
uné, & indivisible.

REÇU du Citoyen Ministre de la Justice, 29
le ~~Secrét~~ ~~Comptable~~ dont en forme
du Décret numéroté 1637

qui ordonne le prompt jugement
de la Neuve Capel au Tribunal
révolutionnaire

qu'il m'a adressé le 7. 8^{bre}

Les Commissaires des
Comptabilité Nationale

Leclercq
Causin

Négaron
Pierrot

Citoyen Ministre de la Justice.

nothing left to-day to recall the dramatic setting of those days. The coved panels of the ceiling, once more exposed to view, are more brilliantly gilt than ever, and hardly harmonise with the commonplace simplicity of a court of justice. A part of the hall has been cut off towards the river, so that the apartment has lost its imposing proportions.

Once they cut off heads there,—now they part ill-assorted married couples. . . . It is very much less tragic . . . and sometimes they can be glued together again,—which heads and necks cannot!



Marie-Antoinette before the Revolutionary Tribunal

UNDERNEATH THE SEINE

IT is nine o'clock, and a brilliant sun illumines Paris. On the *Quai aux Fleurs*, where it is market-day, the country-women, expelled from their kiosques by the works in connexion with the new *Métro.* railway, have deposited their hampers of many-coloured flowers along the side walks, taking a stand within a few yards of the *Palais de Justice*, and just behind that eyesore, the *Tribunal de Commerce*, geraniums—red, pink and purple—calceolarias, heliotropes, hortensias, phloxes, petunias, mignonette, jasmine, stacked together at random, make up the most startlingly vivid and beautiful of Oriental carpets, spread out before a barrier of grey planking, giving entrance to a builder's yard in full activity. Here will be the future Underground Station for the *Cité*, whence will go the tube which, diving under the Seine at a depth of twenty-five yards and more, is to unite the left bank of the River with the right. Descending a slippery wooden stairway, steeper than a mill-ladder, and lo! we find ourselves at the water's brink.

A surprising and unexpected sight is spread before us, recalling certain Japanese prints in which the great artist Hokusai has represented in strange decorative lines "the hundred views of Fusi-yama, the incomparable mountain of Yeddo". Seen through a forest of dark beams, cross-

pieces and buttresses, almost terrifying in their complexity, in a clear, translucent atmosphere, and with a gentle sound of plashing water, glide past boats and barges, steam-tugs and *bateaux-mouches*; far away the statue of Fame in the *Place du Châtelet* shows a sparkle of gold against the green masses of the trees, while over our heads, as if suspended in the sky, is a vast grey-blue panorama of Paris, dominated by the majestic outline of the *Tour Saint-Jacques*. In the immediate foreground emerge great red tubes, all the lower half under water; these are the chimneys required for ventilation and for the descent of the workmen labouring below the bed of the river. Trickling down embankments of wet earth, dirty water drips on our heads; yet we remain where we are, lost in wonder, as though nailed to the miry ground. Our feet rest on planks sticky with mud; looking down through the interstices you can see the Seine rolling by with a swift, broken current, the swirl of which is plainly audible.

Presently we enter a timbered gallery, the floor scored with the rails on which the little spoil-waggons run, and then turn into a vast cutting that bisects the *Marché-aux-Fleurs*, the paulonias in which show their tops over the palings that barricade us in. A group of staring idlers watch our little company crowded in front of some old stones. We must look very much like a class of hospital students round a patient's bed.

Our professor is the eminent M. Héron de Villefosse, who is ready, of his kindness, to tell us all about the recent archæological discoveries made in the soil of Roman Paris. Unearthed only a few hours since, these venerable stones, seventeen centuries old, are still so friable from

moisture they can only be touched with infinite care and precaution. Before us are ranged bas-reliefs—some intact, some in pieces—mutilated capitals, truncated columns, inscribed pillars. M. de Villefosse has borrowed of M. Ch. Normand, the learned and enthusiastic President of the *Société des Amis des Monuments*, a bit of pointed stick, and kneeling on a newspaper spread on the miry ground,



The Paris *Métropolitain* under Construction.

is busy with the utmost skill and tenderness of touch in freeing from their disfiguring incrustation of Seine mud a series of Roman inscriptions traced in fine lapidary characters. By his side M. Ch. Sellier, our devoted collaborator at the *Carnavalet*, and inspector of Parisian excavations, is cleaning with loving care a great bas-relief on which three figures draped in *péplums* can already be made out. . . .

All about us, resting on broken columns and mutilated capitals, are displayed iron clamps almost eaten away by rust, shards of iridescent glass that glitter like peacocks' feathers, a drinking goblet, bits of pottery ware. We scribble our hurried memoranda in a cutting, the excavated walls of which are composed of the débris of twenty centuries. It is a heterogeneous mixture of different soils—brown, yellow, red—of grey stones and pulverised brick, of accumulated rubbish blocking the vaults of cellars and openings into subterranean chambers. Buried in this strange compost were found these fine carved stones that prove how sumptuous must have been the Lutetia of the Antonines during the Roman occupation.

Everywhere navvies are hard at work,—wide breeches of faded velveteen, pink or blue shirts with sleeves rolled up over brawny arms, tanned by sun and rain, the head covered with a weather-stained drooping felt. . . . Right and left are anvils, portable forges, ladders left standing in the excavations. In the background the high black arms of a gigantic crane move to and fro. The whistling of escaping steam half drowns the distracting din produced right under the walls of the Préfecture of Police by the riveters hammering might and main at the iron girders destined to support the future railway station of the *Métro*, for the *Cité*.

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The next thing is to visit the works being carried on under the bed of the Seine. M. Faillie, Chief Engineer in Charge, has for months had his master-hand on these vast operations; to-day he is good enough personally to conduct us on this expedition,—which is not without its difficulties for the neophyte. “You are not afraid? . . . your heart

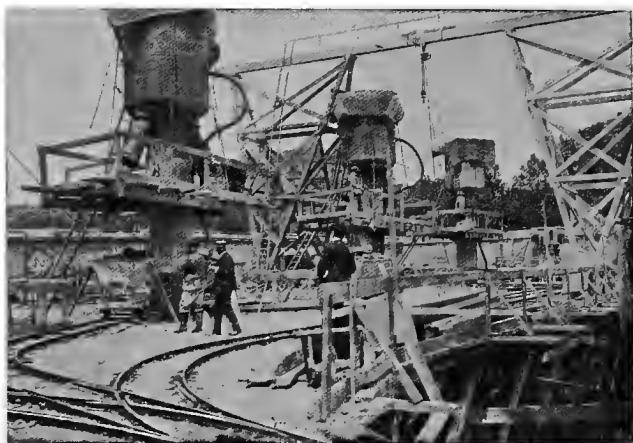
isn't given to playing you tricks? . . . good! then away we go!"—A pleasant companion and a good fellow, M. Marcel Vernet, forsaking the artistic photographs he was in the act of taking of the bas-reliefs discovered yesterday, has joined our party. We soon reach the staging where the heads of the huge piles, crowned with a bell-hat and swathed in canvas petticoat and brown breeches, look like so many sailors; we clamber up ladders and arrive at the level of the *Quai* in front of those long red pipes that look so decorative at a distance, but are by no means so attractive when it comes to getting into one and climbing down to the depths below! A compressed-air bell, like a gigantic cork of sheet-iron, six feet in diameter, surmounts each of them; this is the "compression chamber." In the middle is a tiny opening,—the "man-hole," so called because a man can just with difficulty squeeze through it.

At last we are all properly packed in the little circular cage, and the iron door is firmly screwed up. . . . "Breathe slowly, and when the buzzing in your ears gets too bad, pinch the end of your nose and swallow your saliva,"—those are the orders. M. Faillie, manometer in hand, gives the signal, and the compressed air begins to whistle into our prison.

A few seconds and the sweat is rolling down our cheeks; there is a stifling sensation, the temples throb violently, and a whole regiment of drummers seems to be practising their noisiest music in each ear. This pleasing operation is called "going through the air-lock." They shout out excellent hints for our benefit, of which we cannot hear one word; pantomime is the only resource, and we pinch our noses with a will, but our throats being

entirely blocked by a spasmodic contraction, it is a monstrously difficult thing to swallow one's saliva. . . . At last M. Faillie has the cover of the descending man-hole lifted, and a blast of cold, damp air enters by the aperture.

How dark it is! and what a long way down! and what a very precarious hold the small iron clamps fixed all down the tube afford! . . . But there, it's too late



Surface Works of the *Métropolitain* ; Ventilation Tubes, etc.

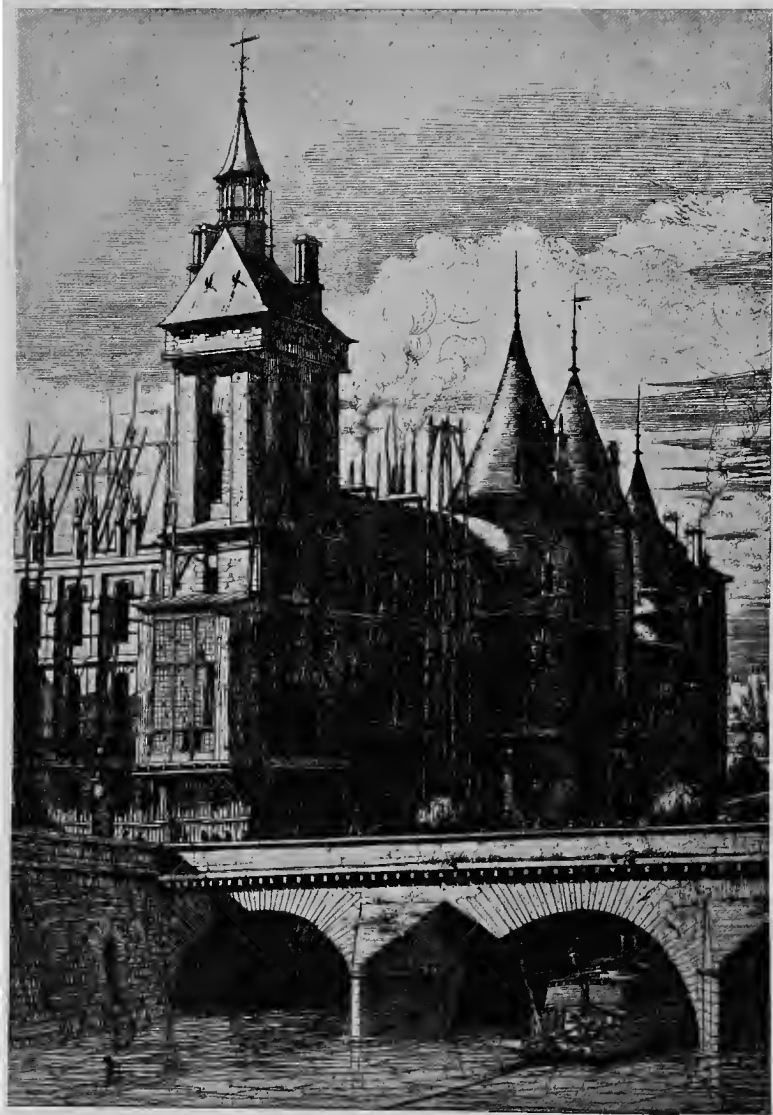
to draw back now, or think of one's nerves. . . . Keep a good heart, that's the only way. Both my companions disappear down the tube ; now it's my turn, and down I go, with a workman ahead of me to put my stumbling feet straight on the footholds. It is hot, horribly hot, though every now and then great hurricanes of cold wind come from below, lashing us with a chilling blast. But, what an endless lot of steps ! . . . there are, as a matter

of fact, it appears, only fifty-two, and fifteen yards is the total descent. . . . I would have wagered double. This scrambling down in the dark seems endless; you can see nothing, and only hear vague, mysterious rumblings. Finally we reach the working chamber, right under the flooring of the iron caisson within which the trains will move one day, and the weirdness, the strangeness, the beauty of the novel sight repays us for all our fatigue.

We are beneath the Seine, our feet rest on the actual bed of the ancient river. . . . A startling thought! A gallery, very long and very low, stretches away in the distance, lit by scores of electric globes. The workmen's heads all but touch the iron ceiling, from which hang their belongings,—bundles of clothes, drinking-cans and tool-bags. The bottom of the river is of sand and pebbles strewn with bits of broken timber and blocks of stone; you stumble over heaps of gravel and wade through standing pools of water.

A gang of fifty navvies, naked to the waist and booted to mid-thigh, is working away placidly amid the never-ceasing roar of the powerful compressed-air motors which on either hand drive back the river water under the cutting-edges that line the working-chamber and are cleaving day by day deeper and deeper into the bed of the Seine.

Some of the fellows are breaking up stones with sledge-hammers, and piling them in loads which, directly they are full, disappear through the steel roof; others are tearing out trunks of trees and masses of old iron, or hacking up strangely contorted fragments of black wood, that look like the carcasses of weird river monsters,—we are right under the moorings of a charcoal boat; many more,



Tour de l'Horloge and Round Towers of Conciergerie

standing up to their knees in water, are digging out the sand in great spadefuls, excavating the bed of the stream. Lying on a heap of gravel, I watch and wonder at the prodigious sight.

But it is time to return ; to stay longer would make the ascent still more difficult for arms and lungs untrained to this most fatiguing exercise. . . . So here I am reclimbing—with what arduous effort!—the interminable steps of the dark, stifling tube. Arrived at the bell, I am hauled in, and smiling, good-humoured workmen face me with their leather sou'-westers. . . . I am choking, though piercing whistles prove that the air is escaping outwards. However, it is needful, under penalty of grave risks, to proceed slowly and judiciously. At length the iron door is opened, and I rejoin my companions, who had come up before me. We are outside, safe and sound, but in what a state of dilapidation. . . . How good it is to breathe the natural air of heaven, and how agreeable to contemplate once more the architecture of the *Palais de Justice*, the *Tour de l'Horloge* and the old Round Towers of the *Conciergerie* !

It is a sight never to be forgotten. All the same I should not care to recommend a similar excursion to my fair readers. For our elegant Parisiennes a walk in the streets of Paris is decidedly a better amusement than one underneath the Seine.

(28th June, 1906)

THE RIGHT BANK

THE PLACE DE LA BASTILLE

AND THE BOULEVARD BEAUMARCHAIS

ON 14th July, 1789, about half past five in the afternoon, the news spread through Paris that the Bastille had fallen. Impossible to form any idea of the stupefaction caused by the incredible tidings. It was the end of a world. Hesitating to accept such a miracle as conceivable, Paris was fain to see, to look with all its eyes at this monstrous, this unheard of spectacle,—the Bastille taken prisoner! From every side, from alleys and streets and boulevards, from the inner suburbs and the outer, crowds converged on the purlieus of the gloomy fortress. . . . But no one ventured to pass the Gate. On the *Quai Pelletier*, Grammont, the actor, perched on a wayside post, exhorted the passers-by to be careful: "There are quarries underneath Paris; beware of powder mines!" But presently curiosity carried the day, and next morning all was eagerness to visit the captured stronghold. The victors did the honours; since yesterday their number had doubled; it was increased tenfold, when the question was raised of voting them a National recompense!

In an open carriage was paraded a certain Whyte,—an old mad Englishman,—who could make nothing of his

triumphal progress, and begged them to take him back to his dungeon. Latude, who had been released five years before, whom circumstances had again made the hero of the hour, was besieged with invitations, hostesses fought for the honour of receiving him. Accompanied by Mme. Legros,—his “second mother,”—he made endless speeches, recounted his wrongs, unrolled his rope-ladders, showed his tools, told of the numberless letters he wrote on the lining of his waistcoats with ink made by mixing lamp-black with his portion of prison wine! . . . Mirabeau, an old familiar of the Bastille, pushed his way under its vaulted entrance, pretty Mme. Lejay on his arm, from the bookshop in the *Rue de l'Échelle*. Manuel came to recover the manuscript of some villainous verses which he had hidden during his confinement in the dusty stuffing of an old armchair. . . . All Paris was at fever-heat. At night every window was lit up with lanterns. The Duchess of Sutherland writes to Lady Stafford: “Men armed with pistols, swords or pikes scour the streets in every direction . . . old rusty lances are sharpening on the stone posts at every corner”.—Patrols of the National Guard went in squads to go over the dreadful fortress. Every hole and corner was eagerly inspected, visitors showed each other the spot where Louis XI. had shut up several nobles in iron cages, and touched the hooks, still *in situ*, which had supported the scaffold, five feet high, erected in the Main Court of the Prison. Hereon had been executed on 30th July, 1602, Charles de Gontaut-Biron, Marshal of France. “The headsman struck him so terrible a sword-blow that his head flew to the midst of the said Courtyard.” They recalled the memory of by-gone prisoners,—Louis de Rohan, Fouquet, La

Voisin, the Man of the Iron Mask,¹ Voltaire. The Bastille



Portrait of Latude

¹“The Man in the Iron Mask,”—variously supposed by popular fancy and writers of romance to have been a son of Cromwell, the Duc de Beaufort, who disappeared during an action at Candia and was never heard of again, or a twin brother of Louis XIV., who it was desirable for State reasons should vanish from the scene. Apparently he was none of these, but a person of much humbler birth, the depositor of some monstrous secret; but the whole story is wrapped up in impenetrable mystery. Dumas follows the third supposition (twin brother of Louis XIV.) in his

was never empty till the day when Soulès—the new Governor appointed by the Municipality—thought right



Execution of Gontaut Biron (from a contemporary print)

to suspend these visits under the remarkable pretext that "such damage had already been done to the fortress by visitors that it would cost over 200,000 livres . . . to put it in repair".

Paré in his *Souvenirs* describes the furious anger which this preposterous

motive of "repairing the Bastille" roused in the breast of Danton, Sergeant in the National Guard, who with his Section had been confronted by this strange notice. Danton grips the unhappy Soulès by the collar and hauls him off to the Hôtel de Ville. The ridiculous order is withdrawn, and visitors flock there as before till the time when four National engineers, de La Poëze, de Montizon, Poyet and de Savault are entrusted with the task of demolishing the Bastille.¹ Then it was

Vicomte de Bragelonne. See *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*; Part II. *Man in the Iron Mask*, in Methuen's *Complete Dumas*, translated by Alfred Allinson. [Transl.]

¹ *Souvenirs de Danton*,—autograph MS. of Paré (Collection of Georges Cain).

the patriot Palloy appears on the scene, who puts the famous State Prison under systematic contribution; from the stones he carves "models of the Fortress, dedicated to the Departments and the Assemblies," or commemorative tablets well fitted to "stimulate the Nation's Spirit"; he utilises the lead and chains to make bracelets, medals, rings. With marbles of different colours he conceives the happy and delicate thought of constructing a set of dominos which he offers to the young Dauphin "to inspire in him a horror of tyranny".¹

All the world goes in merry bands to watch the demolition of the Bastille; it is the fashionable thing to do. It is considered modish "to take one's turn at the pick," and the most elegant ladies do so. All along the moats, under the old walls of the fortress, drinking-booths are opened; the wine flows freely, the fiddles scrape, ropes of coloured lamps light up the scene, and the ruins of the dreaded prison

¹ The cover (repaired) of this curious toy is shown in one of the glass-cases in the Musée Carnavalet,—Salle de la Bastille. On a piece of grey marble, about $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height and nearly 8 broad, are inscribed the four verses:—

"De ces cachots affreux, la terreur des Français,
Vous voyez les débris transformés en hochets.
Puissent-ils en servant aux jeux de votre enfance
Du peuple vous prouver l'amour et la puissance."

"Of these horrid dungeons, the terror of the French, you see the remains transformed into playthings. May they, serving for the diversion of your childhood, prove to you the affection and power of the people." Underneath is written this note in manuscript: "1st January, 1790, the Grenadiers of the National Guard of Paris came, with musicians marching at their head, to bring Monseigneur the Dauphin a set of dominos made out of stones and marble taken from the demolition of this State Prison. The Queen ordered Mme. Campan to keep for her this curious historical monument of popular excitement. At the pillage on 10th August it was smashed, and only the broken lid was found. Mme. Campan, in obedience to the order she had been given, ever afterwards kept this in her possession."

are plastered with a staring notice of "Dancing here!" The site is levelled and used for civic fêtes. On 11th July, 1791, the body of Voltaire lies there in view before being carried to the Panthéon; in 1793 Hérault de Séchelles presides in the same place at the Festival of Fraternity.



"Ici l'on danse"

. . . Under the Consulate the ground is left vacant and unoccupied, but Napoleon I., in 1810, instructs Alavoine to erect there the model of a huge fountain of a strange and monumental type; an elephant, seventy-four feet high rises in the south-east corner of the *Place*,—near the

canal, a little to the left of the present station of the *Métro*. It was surmounted by a tower painted green and discharged a jet of water through its trunk.

Built provisionally of clay and rough plaster, the elephant very soon became, under the action of rain and wind and dust, a deplorable ruin, cracked, crumbling and weather-stained, surrounded by a palisade of rotten planks. Rank grass grew between its legs, and the general level of the Square having been raised, it looked as if the ground were giving way under the monster's weight. "There was about it," wrote Victor Hugo, "something of the foulness of garbage, that will be swept into the kennel, and something of the majesty of kings, that will come to the axe."¹ The Paris street-boys used to gaze at it with awe, while the rats had made it their chosen abode to such a degree that when, about 1845, it was finally demolished, regular

¹"It was an elephant forty feet high, constructed of timber and masonry, bearing on its back its tower or howdah, which was like a house, originally painted green by some dauber, now coloured black by the storms of heaven, the rain and the weather. In this lonely and open part of the *Place*, the monster's huge head, its trunk and tusks, the tower it carried, its enormous back and four feet like columns, formed at night a shape that was very startling and terrible as it loomed out against the starry sky. What it meant exactly, who could say? It was a species of symbol of the power of the masses,—sombre, enigmatic and enormous. It was a grim and threatening spectre, still standing there before men's eyes, beside the vanished phantom of the Bastille.

"Few strangers ever visited the monument, no passer-by ever turned to look at it. Our 'aediles,' as the fashionable phrase goes, had forgotten it ever since 1815. There it was in its corner, a melancholy, decrepit object, crumbling to decay. . . . It was foul, the butt of universal scorn, repulsive and yet somehow sublime, an eyesore to the cit, a pathetic spectacle to the thinkers. . . . When twilight fell, the old elephant was transfigured; it took on a look of dreadful calm in the awe-inspiring serenity of the shades of night."—Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (where the little Gavroche takes advantage of the works of the great Napoleon, and makes his home in the inside of the Elephant), p. 523.

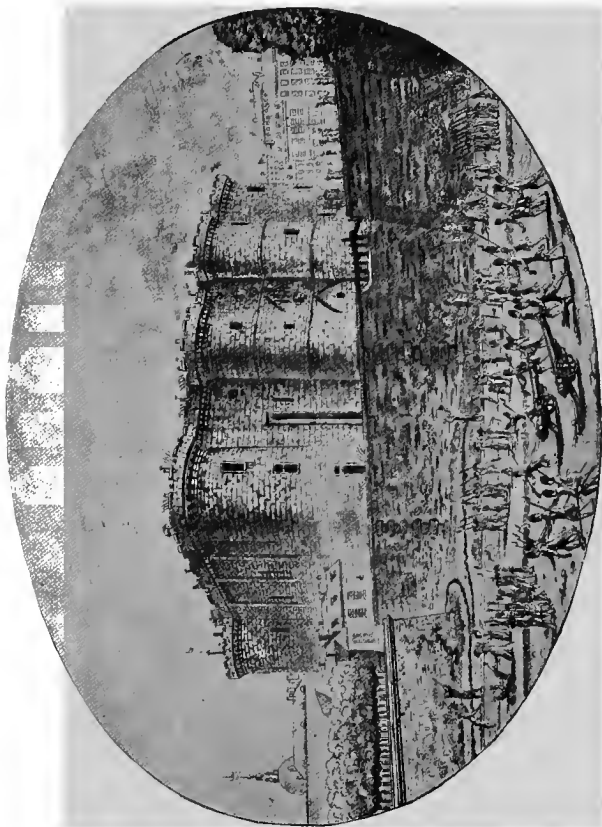
battues had to be organised with men and dogs, to rid the terrified neighbourhood of the vermin.

What is left to-day of the Bastille and its eight Towers? Nothing, or next to nothing. Six years ago, when the first, the original line of the *Métropolitain* was built, the excavations brought to light, right in the middle of the *Rue Saint-Antoine*, before the door of No. 1, and extending some way under the footpath, the foundations of the *Tour de la Liberté*. The Municipal Council decreed that these historic remains should be preserved and removed to the *Quai des Célestins*, bordering the river, where the public can inspect them at this present moment.

The substructions of the other Towers are to be found in cellars of houses in the *Rue Saint-Antoine* and the *Boulevard Henri IV.*, or are marked on the surface of the Place itself by lines of black paving-stones. Two drawbridges guarded the fortress; the approach was by a winding road bounded on the right by barracks, on the left by shops; it began in the *Rue Saint-Antoine* where No. 5 now stands, as an inscription on the spot indicates.¹ The first (the advanced drawbridge), the chains of which the people broke down with hatchets, opened at the corner of the *Boulevard Henri IV.*, on the ground now occupied by the omnibus bureau; the second (the drawbridge of the Entrance Gate) was situated in the *Place de la Bastille*, in the line of the *Boulevard Bourdon*, a few yards higher up than the present *Café Henri IV.* . . . A few meagre lines traced between the flag-stones, entangled among the

¹ "These shops were situated in such a way as to serve as a covered way for the assailants; it was de Launay's interest as governor to destroy them, to free the approaches. He did nothing of the sort because he drew a large income from the rents."—A. Carro, *l'ie politique et privée de Santerre*, p. 38.

tramway rails, a few stones removed from their original site,—that is all that remains of the celebrated fortress. . . . Latude himself could not identify the localities!



The Bastille

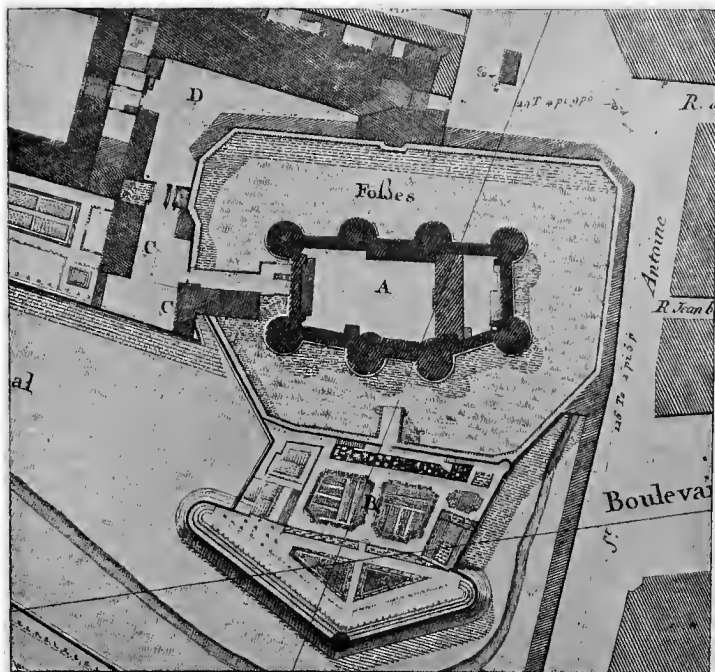
The Canal flows over the site of the moats, and the embanking wall alongside the *Boulevard Bourdon*, is the identical wall built by Henri II.,—it was only about 1827 that it was slightly modified by the addition of a parapet.

The two houses forming the entrance to the *Rue de Lesdiguières*, as also the building No. 1 of the *Rue des Tournelles*, are intact or nearly so, while No. 7 of the *Rue Saint-Antoine* shows us a perfect example of the low-browed dwellings that formed the majority of bourgeois habitations about the year 1789. On the site of Nos. 8 and 10 of the *Rue de Lesdiguières* (the *Rue de Lesdiguières* where Balzac once lived¹) could still be seen, only a few years ago, one of the enclosing walls of the Bastille. A row of narrow houses have been built against it, and at No. 10, it is the actual wall of the old fortalice of Paris that forms the back of the Concierge's lodge—oh! the strange mutability of things!

On 20th July, 1840, was inaugurated the Column which now rises in the middle of the square, surmounted by the Genius of Liberty setting her flying foot above the city. It is 170 feet high—which makes it a favourite resort of suicides—and covers the corpses of the combatants who fell during the three days of the Revolution of 1830. The bodies lay widely scattered, in front of the Colonnade of the Louvre, in the Champ-de-Mars, some even at Montmartre. All were collected and brought to the *Place de la Bastille*,—not without sundry intruders finding their way there too. . . . In an admirable preface, teeming with interesting reminiscences,² Victorien Sardou, speaking of the Colonnade of the Louvre, tells us how “under the Restoration there had been buried, just where Velasquez' equestrian statue stands, a number of Egyptian mummies that had become decomposed by too long a

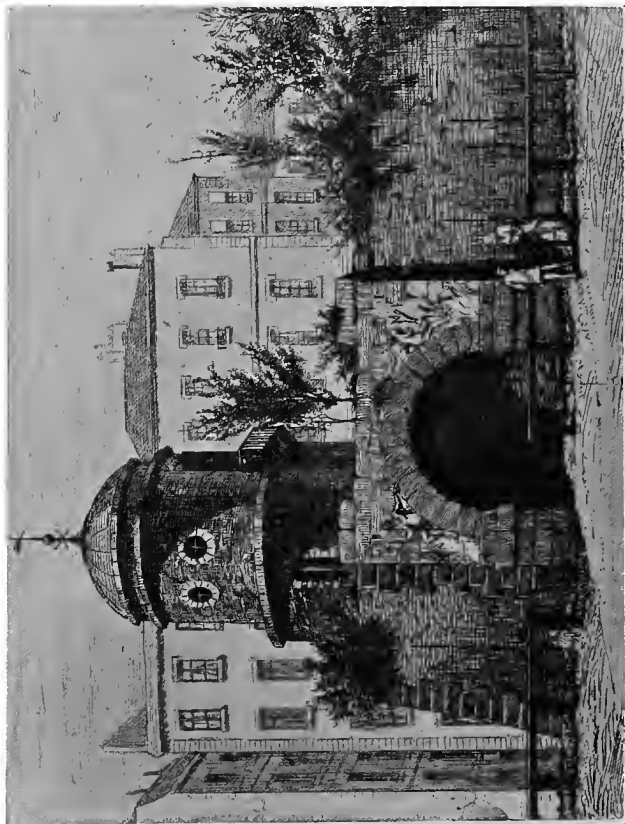
¹ Balzac (*Facino Cane*).

² *Coins de Paris*, by Georges Cain.—Preface by V. Sardou (Flammarion, 26 Rue Racine, Paris).



*Place de la Bastille—From Plan of the Quartier Saint-Antoine, by
Jaillot, 1774*

sojourn in the ground-floor rooms of the Louvre. In 1830, at the same spot, the bodies of the assailants killed



The Gardens of Beaumarchais

in the attack on the Louvre were hurriedly thrown into a common grave. Ten years later, when it was desired to give these heroes a more noble sepulture, patriots and mummies were dug up pell-mell. And so the contem-

poraries of the Pharaohs are piously interred under the Bastille Column, as brave fighters of the July Revolution!"

Better than most indeed Victorien Sardou is qualified to speak of the *Place de la Bastille*, which he knew so well in the heyday of his youth. About 1838, when quite a lad, he lived within a few yards of it, with his parents, in the *Rue Saint-Antoine*, quite close to the *Rue Beautreillis*, where he saw the light at No. 16.¹ Endless were the games of hoop, football and prisoner's base played with his young companions round the Elephant and by the banks of the Canal; in fact it was on occasion of one of these boyish frolics that the remarkable boy, already an explorer and full of curiosity, actually penetrated Beaumarchais' privacy! . . . or to speak with more rigorous precision, got into what was left of the famous gardens that had so stirred the imagination of the Parisians that no one at that date (about 1787) was admitted without a card bearing the signature of the author of *Figaro*, a privilege only very sparingly accorded. Now one day when little Sardou, in company with another boy of his own age, was trundling his hoop in the neighbourhood of the *Canal Saint-Martin*, the little fellow suddenly stopped dead in delighted amazement! A line of old walls and worm-eaten palings bounded a piece of vacant ground, and

¹ The Master makes this quite plain in the following note: "Dear friend—I think the house in the *Rue Beautreillis* bears the number 16. It may perhaps have been altered. It was then occupied by a painter, the Sieur Bauvais. But in any case it is easy to identify. It is the only house in the street, or even in the quarter, as far as I know, to which access is obtained by a long vaulted passage pierced half way by a miniature courtyard open to the sky and provided with old-fashioned wooden balustrades. It was a *dépendance* of the Hôtel de Charny. . . .

the palings were adorned with a whole series of gaudy pictures by Épinal,—soldiers, actors and actresses, figures of Geneviève de Brabant, the Wandering Jew, the Four Sons of Aymon. What a ravishing discovery! But lo! while examining these wonders, the boy peeps between two ill-fitting planks, and catches sight of a neglected garden! What garden can it be? . . . Suppose we went in? . . . So there they are, Sardou and his little comrade, prising away a plank with their hoop sticks, and squeezing through, in a delicious state of trepidation, into this mysterious domain of trailing bindweed and rank vegetation and flowers of vivid, exotic hues. The whole place is overrun, grown into a virgin forest in miniature, where birds sing and butterflies flit to and fro and rabbits scamper at their own sweet will. Sardou can still call to mind an old pavilion in ruins, as well as the Gate of Entrance, and another abandoned garden bordering on the *Rue du Pas-de-la-Mule*. These were the sole vestiges of the once magnificent dwelling of Beaumarchais, surmounted in his day with a pen by way of weathercock and symbol!—There can hardly be a more exquisite treat than to listen to this same honey-tongued Sardou as he recounts, in words that at once charm the ear and stir the imagination, his fascinating stories, told with such consummate skill, of that Paris of an earlier day which he regrets so keenly and knows so well.

THE PLACE DES VOSGES

(PLACE ROYALE)

WITHIN a few hundred yards of the *Place de la Bastille*, scored by tramway lines, noisy with the hum of motors, traversed in all directions by cabs and buses and drays, crowded with busy pedestrians diving into the *Métro*. Station or hurrying to the ticket office of the *Gare de Vincennes*, at the upper end of the short *Rue du Pas-de-la-Mule*, lies the quiet old *Place des Vosges*. Once the *Place Royale*, the pride and joy of Paris, it is to-day no more than a silent, dreary-looking garden surrounded by old houses of stone and brick, the red of which time has subdued to a rather dismal hue. The provincial calm of the ancient Square contrasts strangely with the animation of the surrounding streets and boulevards.

If the deafening rattle of the Bastille-Wagram omnibus did not recall us to present-day realities, we might, without any great effort, believe ourselves transported to the Paris of three hundred years ago; we breathe the full flavour of the seventeenth century. The ancient mansions crowned with extinguisher roofs, the whole spot impregnated with an odour of neglect and decay, remind one of the romantic *Béguinages* of Bruges, of the Florentine piazzas, the delightful buildings of a more picturesque age.

How many of our Parisiennes lift their charming eyes in ecstasy before the sights of foreign lands, who are guilty of the unpardonable sin of knowing nothing whatever about the "*Place Royale*," which Corneille celebrated in 1635, where the fair votaries of the *Pays du Tendre* flaunted and flirted under the reign of the *Précieuses*, where Ninon de L'Enclos and Marion Delorme gave their lovers assignation,—the *Place Royale* where so many fine fops, breakers of heads and slitters of weazands and breakers of the laws against duelling, exchanged such slashing blows beneath the pensive eye of the "fair fashionables," who, the better to see them cut one another's throats, would daintily lift a corner of the jalousies with the tip of their rosy fingers,—the *Place Royale*, where dwelt the Cardinal de Richelieu, Chabannes, the Marquis de Flers, Rohan-Chabot, the Maréchal de Chaulnes, the Marquis de Breteuil, the Marquis de Dangeau, Canillac, Mlle. du Châtelet, the Prince de Talmont, and many others famous in history; where Mme. de Sévigné was born, where the great tragic actress Rachel¹ lived, where from one window to another, Victor Hugo and Théophile Gautier discussed art and poetry! Now its only frequenters are the children from the neighbouring boarding schools, playing at ball or "saddle-my-nag" round a poor statue of Louis XIII. comfortably flanked by the kiosque of the good lady who lets out chairs and a Punch and Judy show!

To recall the successive *avatars* of the *Place des Vosges*

¹ Rachel died 3rd January, 1858, at Le Canet, near Cannes, at the Villa Sardou. Her obsequies were held 8th January in Paris: "The cortège will assemble at her house, 9 *Place Royale* in the *Marais*. The family beg the numerous friends and acquaintances of Mlle. Rachel to consider the present notification as an invitation to the funeral."—*Gazette des Tribunaux*, 7th January, 1858.

is to go through the history of France. On this spot Charles V. erected the *Hôtel des Tournelles*, a sort of suburban country-house surrounded by gardens and a little bosky wood, "where the Kings used to walk for refreshment by reason of the beauty and amenity of the place,"—the *Rue du Parc-Royal* is a relic of these vanished days. At a later date, during the occupation of Paris by the English, a period when "death was dealing his blows so



Place Royale—Place des Vosges (from an old print)

hard and fast that great trenches had to be dug in the cemeteries into which the corpses were pitched thirty and forty at a time, piled in layers like streaky bacon and barely dusted over with earth atop," the Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, takes up his abode at the *Tournelles*, which he enlivens with "peacocks and rare birds confined in a large aviary of brass wire illuminated by nine mirrors".

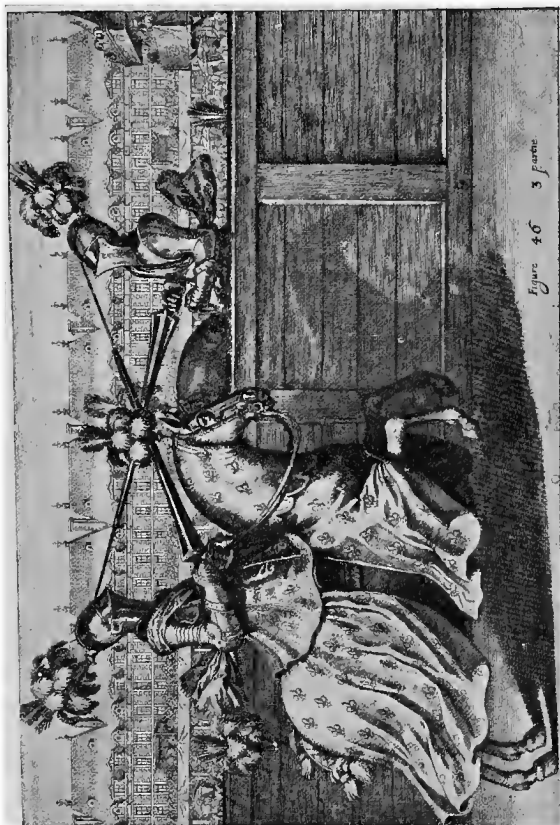
Louis XI. inhabited it, François I. convoked thither the "officers, citizens and commonalty of Paris," to make

arrangements for the farming out of the different taxes of the City—it was the first of municipal loans. Henri II. finding the Palace, “mean, unhealthy and disgusting,” only paid hurried visits there on the occurrence of tourneys and jousts, the “lists” of the *Tournelles*—on the site of the present *Place des Vosges*—being excellently adapted for these festivals of the spear and sword ; for exceptionally important occasions larger “lists” were established in the *Rue Saint-Antoine*. There it was that—between what is nowadays the *Rue de Sevigné* and the *Rue de Birague*—on 1st July, 1559, Henri II., fighting under the colours of Diane de Poitiers and breaking a lance with the Sire de Montgomery, Captain of his Scottish Guard, was mortally wounded. Montgomery’s lance, lifting the visor of the King’s helmet, penetrated his eye. After lying ten days on a bed of pain, Henri died at the *Tournelles*, to which he had been carried after the accident. Since that day no King of France dared occupy the fatal Palace, and Catherine de Médicis, widow of Henri II., obtained the leave of her son Charles IX. to demolish the ill-omened building.

The old walls are pulled down, the scutcheon of France sculptured by Jean de Boulogne is torn from above the Gate, the *Rue des Tournelles* is constructed over the site of the façade,—while, on the site of the old garden, with its maze of flowery walks, is opened a Horse Market.

This *Place du Marché-aux-Chevaux* was the scene of the celebrated and tragic duel of the “Minions,” recorded by L’Estoile: On Sunday, 27th April, 1578, at five in the morning, Quélus, “chiefest of the chief minions of the King,” Maugiron and Livarot met in combat on this spot

Balzac d'Entragues, Ribérac and Schomberg, "who held for the House of Guise". They fought so furiously that the handsome Maugiron and the young Schomberg were



The lists of the *Tourneilles*

left dead on the ground ; Ribérac expired next day, while Livarot was seven weeks sick ; d'Entragues got off safe and sound ; lastly Quélus, "the aggressor and first cause of the rencounter," lay thirty days languishing of the nineteen

wounds he had received, and died at the *Hôtel de Boissy* in the *Rue Saint-Antoine*. Every day the King went and sat at his bedside; "he had promised 100,000 livres to the surgeons, if he should recover his health, and 100,000 crowns to the handsome favourite himself, to give him a good courage to get well". Henri III.'s grief was extreme; as for the good folk of Paris, they only laughed and sang "*vaudevilles*" on the death of these "bloodsuckers":—

Au grand Diable soit telle engeance,
C'est de la graine de Florence
Qui ruinera notre France! . . .
. . . L'Enraguet et ses compagnons
Ont bien étrillé les mignons:
Chacun dit que c'est grand dommage
Qu'il n'en est pas mort davantage!¹

Henri IV., wishing to render the district which had suffered from these demolitions more healthy and handsome, orders Claude Châtillon to draw out the plans of the future *Place Royale*, which he proposes to make the fashionable centre of Paris, to be approached by a number of broad streets bearing the names of the French Provinces. Hence the *Rues de Saintonge, de Béarn, de Bretagne*, etc., streets still in existence. It was not a mere project of city improvement, it was a scheme for centralisation and French unity. So the soil is excavated, foundations are laid and scaffolds run up; fine mansions rise and elegant arcades are formed. Every day the King comes in person to urge on and superintend the works in progress. But in 1610 Henri IV. falls under

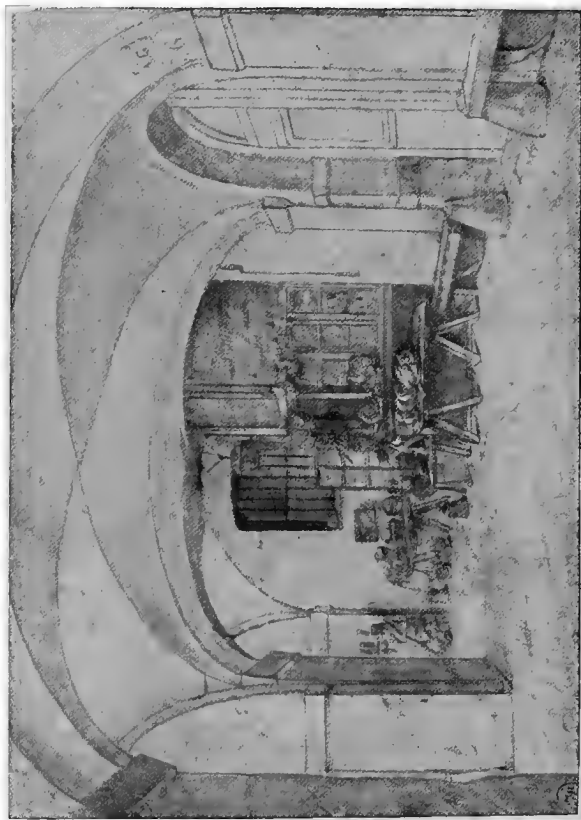
¹ "To the Foul Fiend with such a brood; it comes of the Florence stock that will be the ruin of our land of France! . . . Enraguet and his comrades have given the Mignons a famous currycombing: every one says 'tis a mighty pity no more of them are dead!"

Ravaillac's knife, and it is only in the earlier years of the reign of Louis XIII. that the *Place Royale* is inaugurated.

Such as it was then it remains to this day. But if the stage continues the same, the actors are utterly and entirely changed. Once the *Place Royale* was the cynosure of all eyes, the nucleus of Parisian gaiety. Coaches and carrying-chairs set down all the fashionable beauties there; there the most elegant cavaliers pranced their steeds under the fascinated eyes of their "divinities"; there the *Précieuses*, lisping and bepainted, "talked Vaugelas"; there the Fops struck their swaggering attitudes and displayed their insolent stare and curled moustaches and sweeping plumes. Court and Town looked and longed in front of the sumptuous shops,—goldsmiths and silversmiths and armourers, dealers in brocades and laces and Venice cloths, booksellers who sold Mlle. de Scudéry's latest romance and maps of the *Pays du Tendre*.

. . . Now all speaks of desertion, loneliness and neglect. Three sides of the vast quadrangle are empty, literally empty; the fourth shelters a few humble traders; shy second-hand dealers vend old candlesticks spotted with verdigris, broken-down umbrellas, dilapidated bicycles, decrepit flutes; a couple of chairs support three or four planks piled with dusty volumes,—*L'Escroc du grand monde*, an old Bible, the *Revue de l'École de pharmacie*, the *Voyages de jeune Anacharsis* and the *Cuisinière* *bourgeoise*. A grocer's shop-front, decorated for the coming Christmastide strikes the only note of gaiety in the depressing dinginess of these long, dreary, unfrequented arcades. A fruiterer displays his red cabbages and carrots and bundles of salsify along the walls of the vaulted passage ending the *Rue de Béarn*,—the same passage down

which ground the wheels of Marion Delorme's coach, and which is surmounted by a symbolic sun, sculptured in



Entrance to Victor Hugo's House in the *Place des Vosges*

stone, that looks as if it were ashamed to look upon such fallen fortunes!

To-day, in this dreary December weather, the garden is deserted, but in summer the stunted trees that surround

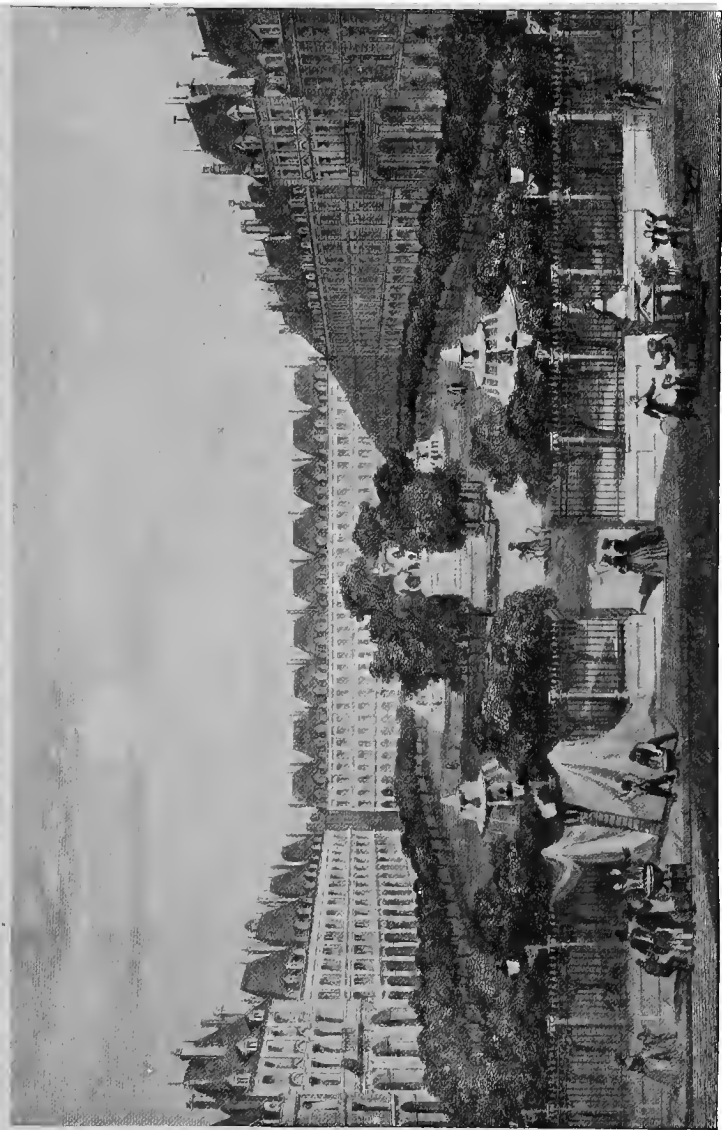
it shelter a tribe of nursemaids and children,¹ with their escort of linesmen, housewives knitting in the sun, and old fellows of the *Marais* living on their means, who come here to read the newspaper and smoke their pipe. At the identical spot where they sit at their ease, on Wednesday, 12th May, 1627,—the very day following the promulgation of Cardinal Richelieu's edict against duelling,—François de Montmorency, Comte de Bouteville (the young man whom the Père Séguenot admired greatly, "because at the age of only twenty-four, after fighting nineteen duels, he had so far killed outright only two of his adversaries"), alighted from his coach at three o'clock in the afternoon. Des Chapelles and the Comte de La Berthe acted as his seconds, while the Comte de Beuvron, his opponent, was accompanied by Buquet and Bussy d'Amboise. They saluted, drew off their doublets and fell on guard, sword in one hand, dagger in the other. A few minutes more and La Berthe was grievously wounded and Bussy was dying, his throat cut open by Des Chapelles' sword. Bouteville and Beuvron got off scot-free, but both of them, six weeks afterwards, died in the *Place de Grève*.

¹ " . . . For years the *Place Royale* had the reputation of attracting great numbers of children who found health and strength there. A medical work, *La Topographie médicale de Paris, ou examen des causes qui peuvent avoir une influence marquée sur la santé des habitants de cette ville* ("Medical Topography of Paris,—an Inquiry into Causes capable of exerting a pronounced Influence on the Health of the Inhabitants of that City"), by Lachaize, Doctor of Medicine of Paris (1822, p. 167), writes thus, when speaking of the *Marais* quarter: "The inhabitants of this district have the boulevards for walking, and the children, who swarm there in amazing numbers, are carried to the *Place Royale*, where they enjoy the open air and are exposed to the direct rays of the sun. Accordingly they enjoy better health than those reared in most other quarters of the inner town."—(L. Lambeau, *La Place Royale*, p. 344, 1906—Darragon, 30 Rue Duperré, Paris).

"With a single blow of inconceivable swiftness, the executioner slashed off Bouteville's head ; then his sword, still red with his friend's blood, descended on Des Chapelles' neck."

The *Place Royale* still continued in vogue under Louis XIV. ; but afterwards fashion began to desert it, and her votaries to migrate in the direction of the Tuileries and the Palais-Royal. Finally the cannon of the Bastille sent the last faithful few who still loved the old Square flying. The shops were closed, the stately mansions emptied and the sans-culottes stormed the magnificent railings of wrought-iron dating from Louis XIV. (they can still be admired, at least in part, as they guard the buildings of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* facing the *Rue Vivienne*), and a manufactory of arms was established in the *Place de l'Indivisibilité*. Such was the revolutionary title of the re-baptised *Place Royale*, which under the Consulate and Empire was called the *Place des Vosges*, to return once more to the old name of *Place Royale* from 1815 to 1870, when as of old it became known again as the *Place des Vosges*.

Under Louis-Philippe the artists and men of letters replaced the great nobles. In October, 1832, Victor Hugo set up his household gods at No. 6, in the old house where Marion Delorme lived, and in which the Municipality of Paris has lately established the delightful and valuable Museum which bears the great poet's name. It is there he wrote *Ruy Blas*, *Les Rayons et les Ombres* ; it is there that the populace in June, 1848, invaded his apartments as a Peer of France. "The ragged procession lasted more than an hour ; wretchedness in every shape, indignation in every form, filed past in gloomy silence . . . they came in by one door and went out at another. The roar of cannon



Place Royale—Place des Vosges

could be heard in the distance. When they were gone, it was found that those naked feet had trampled nothing wantonly, that their powder-blackened hands had pilfered nothing.”¹

Then presently, one by one, the artists and men of letters departed in their turn ; on almost every door may be read : “ Apartment to Let,” and this noble Square, one of the finest in Paris, is abandoned to desolation !

A Parisian and a lover of the great city, H. Galli, who represents this old-world quarter on the Municipal Council, has dreamt a fascinating dream :—To restore the Place to its old beauty. A garden *à la française*, with bold heraldic arabesques and harmonious clumps of trees, whose many-coloured borders should spread, as it were, a vast carpet of flowers over this huge space of ground, now so bare and dismal. Then, if the illustrious shades of the famous inhabitants of the old *Place Royale* should venture to revisit their ancient haunts, they would find, restored by pious hands, the same picturesque scene once so renowned as the abode of art and eloquence, the favourite home of brave men and beautiful women.

¹ Victor Hugo, *Actes et Paroles* (Paris-Rome, pp. vi and vii).

THE PASSAGE CHARLEMAGNE

HÔTEL DE SENS—RUE CHARLES-V.

AUTUMN in Paris is delightful. Nothing can be more exquisite than these silvery mornings when the beautiful city is veiled with a delicate grey mist. It is not the gloomy, depressing grey of winter, but rather a light film that floats over everything, softening the distances and outlines, half hiding the hideousness of modern buildings and enabling lovers of the Past to see their dreams as it were materialised and evoke the scenes of other days amid the vague, opalescent vapours. Yes, Autumn is the season for long, leisurely explorations of the old quarters of the city, along streets where the grass grows, in melancholy, neglected gardens where the foot rustles among dead leaves, where purple asters blow and box borders run wild give out a strong, heady perfume.

It is to a very ancient district of Paris we are going to guide our readers to-day, a dilapidated quarter where once stood the Palaces of the earliest Kings of France, but which the centuries have so degraded and mutilated and broken up that hardly anything remains but an old-world name and sundry memories of old-world events.

Close by the *Station Saint-Paul* on the *Metro*, between No. 117, which was the *Salle Rivoli* (a popular dancing-room frequented by all the cook-maids of the neighbour-

hood), and No. 133, the house with the famous balcony supported by admirably carved stone dragons, at 119 *Rue Saint-Antoine* is the opening of the *Passage Charlemagne*. It is here we propose to make our start. Quaint and picturesque, the *Passage Charlemagne* winds at first between grey, ordinary-looking houses, packed close one against the other and devoted to a score of mean trades. There you will find mattress-cleaners, chair-menders, vermicelli sellers, *kosher* butchers. . . . Then suddenly, on turning a corner, you see, to your surprise and the stirring of whatever historical imagination you possess, the impressive remains of a mansion that under Charles V. was the dwelling-place of Hugues Aubryot, Provost of Paris.¹ The Duc d'Orléans, Jean de Montaigne,—beheaded in 1400 on a charge of sorcery!—the Connétable de Richemont, and other great nobles afterwards, lived there,—till the day when the Jesuits purchased it and included it within the buildings of their vast College, of which nothing remains nowadays but the Church of Saint-Paul and a wing or two of the Lycée Charlemagne.² Despite the vandalism that for centuries has worked its will on these old stones, the noble building, ruined as it is, still shows a proud front to

¹ It was King Charles V. who, in 1369, gave Jacques Aubryot the 1500 gold livres necessary for the purchase of the hôtel, as a reward for his "good and loyal services".

² Certain portions of the buildings of the *Lycée Charlemagne* are the remains of the old *Hôtel de Graville d'Anville et de Rochepot*, which extended from the *Rue Saint-Paul* to the City Walls, and which in 1580 became the Professed House of the Jesuit Fathers. The Chapel attached to it has become the Church of Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis. Rebuilt in 1630, it was dedicated by the Cardinal de Bourbon. The *Lycée Charlemagne* was founded in 1802.—G. Pessard, *Dictionnaire historique de Paris*.

One of the gates of the walls of Philippe-Auguste was on the same spot as the entrance gateway of the *Lycée Charlemagne*.—De Rochegude, *Guide pratique à travers le vieux Paris*.

the world, and offers a surprising contrast to the hovels that surround it. A copper-smith has set up his lean-to against graceful Renaissance windows, patched linen is hanging from lines stretched across daintily carved caryatides, and poultry feed at the foot of the tower staircase where the steel spurs of the ancient denizens of the old mansion once rang on the pavement. Above the emblazoned doorway we can discern, half obliterated by the rain, the shop-sign of a plumber and glazier!

.
The *Rue Charlemagne*, by which we come out again, leads into the *Rue des Jardins*, dominated by the venerable dome of *Saint-Paul*. It is a particularly shabby, sordid-looking street, and shows nothing to account for its rustic name, a survival from the flower-beds that once bloomed on its site. The fact is all these poor streets, built on the ruins of the ancient Palace, are reminiscent of past splendours; the *Rue des Lions* recalls the old Royal menagerie, just as the *Rue Beautreillis* does the vine-arbours with their golden grapes where Charles V. took his pleasure, and the *Rue de la Cerisaie* the long pleached alleys of cherry-trees belonging to the *Hôtel Saint-Paul*!

The *Rue des Jardins*, narrow, filthy, and malodorous, slopes down to the Quais, beyond which we catch a glimpse of water and blue sky in the distance. On either hand a line of dark, squat houses, dripping with damp, shelter a wretched population; women in bed-gowns, their hair straggling in their eyes, work and gossip in front of massive doorways of the seventeenth century, and swarms of dirty, laughing, pretty children with tousled manes play in the gutter or chase each other shouting and screaming past the poverty-stricken shops that share

the street with miserable-looking lodgings of the lowest

class, where a night's accommodation is advertised at fifty centimes. It was in the *Rue des Jardins*,—so says tradition,—where the house No. 9 now stands, that the great Rabelais died.

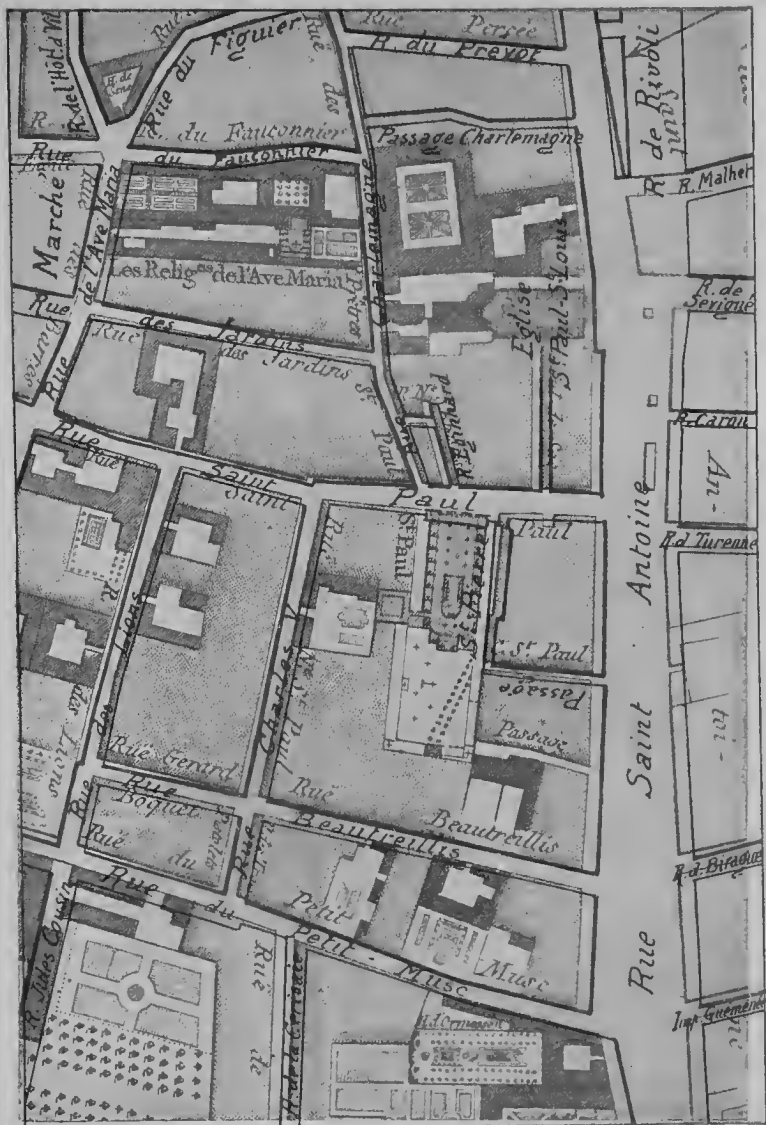
Within a few steps is the *Rue de l'Ave-Maria*, which affords a fine peep of the lofty front of the *Hôtel de Sens*.¹ This noble building, still admirable in its decay, is one of the most remarkable remaining specimens of the architecture of the fifteenth century. Bishops, Cardinals, Royal Highnesses, amongst them Marguerite de Valois—Queen Margot—

have dwelt there. . . . Then it fell on evil days; the

¹ The *Hôtel de Sens* was originally the residence in Paris of the Archbishops of Sens, when they were Metropolitans of the See of Paris,—just as the *Hôtel Cluny* was that of the Abbots of the great Monastery of Cluny, in Burgundy. [Transl.]



Hôtel de Sens

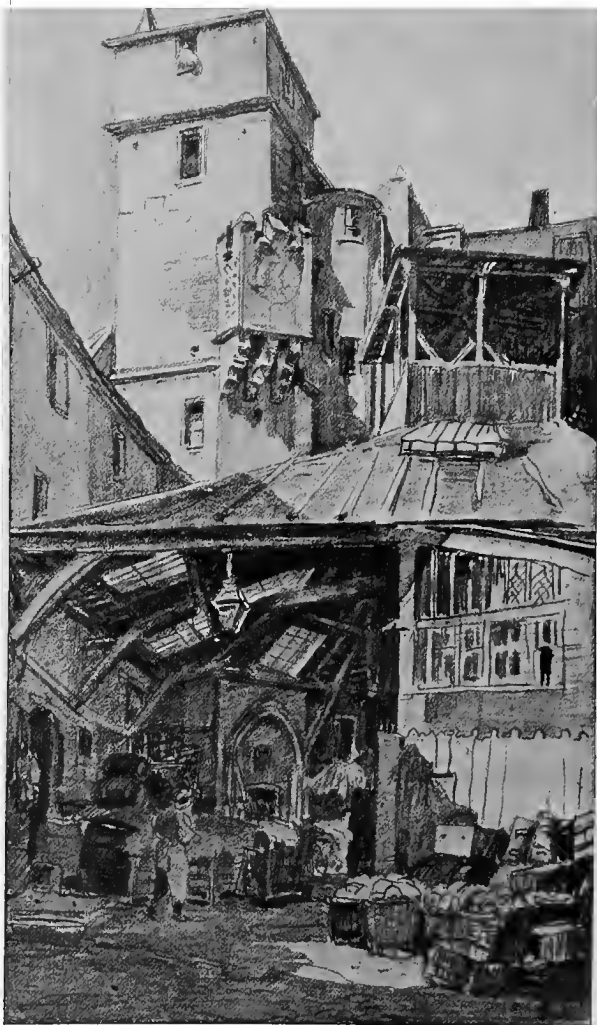


Hôtel de Sens, Saint-Paul—From Plan of the *Quartier Saint-Paul*, by Jaillot,

Hôtel de Sens became a coach office,—they even say it was out of its paved yard that, in the days of the Directory, rolled the celebrated “*Courrier de Lyon*,” immortalised by Dennery, which stirred the pity of generations of playgoers over the undeserved calamities of the unfortunate Lesurques. In the Revolution of 1830 a ball struck its façade and remained incrustéd in the stonework,—the usual present Revolutions make to our ancient monuments. Turn and turn about, occupied by a cab proprietor and a general carrier, etc., etc., the *Hôtel de Sens* lately sheltered a preserve manufactory, and for supreme and final degradation, a picture of the noble building served to cover the pots of plum jam and gooseberry jelly.

At No. 15 of the *Rue de l'Ave-Maria*, an *hôtel meublé* attracts casual customers. It was formerly the tennis-court of the *Croix-Rouge*; there the *Théâtre Illustre* gave representations of comedy, and the great Molière,—who lived probably at the corner of the *Rue des Jardins*,—was, it seems, arrested before its doors and clapped in the Châtelet, in August, 1645, on the writ of one Antoine Fausser, master candlemaker, who claimed the sum of 142 livres for lights supplied.

Passing in the *Rue Saint-Paul* the remains of the *Hôtel la Vieuville*, let us go on to the *Rue Charles-V.*, which the Paris cabmen will persist in calling the *Rue Charles-v.* A vast mansion, at No. 12, offers an imposing front to the street, the *Hôtel Aubray*. It was famous once, not to say notorious; the Marquise de Brinvilliers lived there. It was there occurred the long series of murders, crimes and abominations, the mere enumeration of which,—after so many centuries,—still strikes one as well nigh



Courtyard of the *Hôtel de Sens* (about 1867)

incredible. In his excellent study on *Le Drame des Poisons*, our learned friend F. Funck-Brentano tells us the detailed story of these odious doings, as the contemporary account left by the Père Pirot, her confessor, had already given a picture of the poisoner, "a little woman, very delicately made, with a round face, blue eyes, gentle and entirely beautiful, and a complexion extraordinarily fair," sowing death broadcast about her. In complicity with her lover Sainte-Croix, she prepared her "succession powder," a combination "of vitriol, toad's venom and rarefied arsenic," says a chronicle of the time! "Who could have ever thought," wrote the Lieutenant of Police La Reynie, "that a woman born of an honourable family, whose face and complexion denoted weakness rather than strength, would have made it her amusement to visit the hospitals to poison the patients in order to note the divers effects of her poison?" Similarly the Marquise tried her hand on her own servants. "After eating part of a ham his mistress had given him, François Roussel felt as if a knife had been driven into his heart. . . ." After these experiments *in animâ vili*, the Marquise, convinced of the efficacy of her "recipe of Glaser's"—this was the harmless name she gave her powder—determined to poison her father. She succeeded at last, after making "twenty-eight or thirty" attempts. Afterwards, in connivance with a lackey, she poisoned her two brothers. "Wherever she was, she had poison about her; bottles of arsenic were found even in her toilet closet."

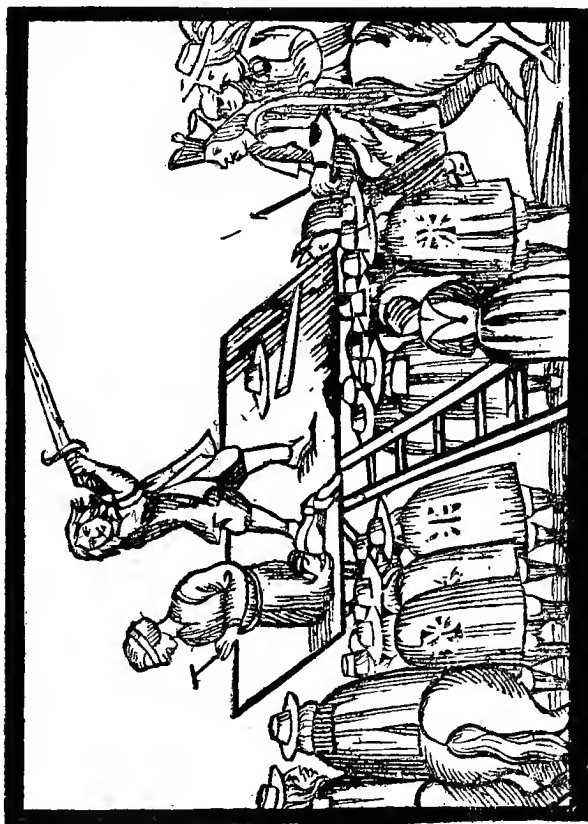
Presently she resolves to "suppress" her sister and her sisters-in-law. But the accomplice she chose, Briancourt,—a poor Secretary who loved her,—not only refused to aid and abet her, but even tried to remonstrate. This

was too much ; his death was decreed. An assignation was given him for midnight in the Marquise's bed-chamber ; the simple lover, anticipating the hour, hid himself in a lateral gallery and waited. A badly fitting casement enables him to see the Brinvilliers, "in her nightcap and almost entirely undressed. Holding a candle in her hand, she was engaged in dismissing her women for the night. The door shut and bolted, she goes to the fireplace and opens the wooden panels—it was summer-time and the fireplace was closed in with double shutters. A man's form comes out on his knees ; it was Sainte-Croix, a hat drawn down over his eyes and wearing an old, shabby doublet. . . . A consultation follows, ending in the exchange of endearments, and then Sainte-Croix creeps back into his hiding-place, over which the shutters are carefully closed."¹ . . . At the sight, Briancourt guesses what is in store for him, and seized with a trembling fit leans his head against the glass of the window, through which the Brinvilliers, as she turns from the fireplace, sees his ashen face of terror. . . . "What is wrong with you? why do you not come in?" . . . Entering at last, he reproaches her with the intention of murdering him ; she protests, finally gets frightened, and Sainte-Croix springs from his place of concealment. The rest of the story is well known,—Sainte-Croix's death, the discovery of her crimes, the excitement in Paris, the execution of the murderess and Mme. de Sévigné's letter thereanent. " . . . It is over now, the Brinvilliers is in the air ; her poor little body was thrown, after the execution, into a huge fire and her ashes scattered to the winds. Consequently we are breathing her now, and by the com-

¹ *Les Causes Célèbres* "Le Procès de la Brinvilliers".

L'EXECUTION

REMARQUABLE,
DE MADAME DE BRINVILLIERS,



Execution of Mme. de Brinvilliers.—From a Broadside of the Period

munication of the volatile spirits of the air, we shall be taken with a poisoning humour that will mightily astonish us all!"

The hôtel where these appalling tragedies were enacted is intact, the fittings unaltered, but by a strange revenge of fate, this house of shame and death is to-day a sanctuary of charity, a home of peace and repose. For years a Religious Community has occupied it, and good Sisters in white nun's caps distribute medicines, cod-liver oil and slices of bread and butter to the poor girls and necessitous old people of this melancholy quarter of the town. It is one of these excellent women that greets us at the door of this house of terrible associations, and with a gentle courtesy does the honours of a melancholy yet charming garden surrounded by old ivy-clad walls, from which are visible rows of windows surmounted by grinning heads, a corner tower wreathed in the tendrils of a wild grape-vine and wrought-iron balustrades over which jasmine is trained. There, in a deep peace, blossom many coloured phloxes, fuchsias, eglantines, white anemones, and the good Mother Superior, her hands crossed inside her wide sleeves, tells us with a gentle smile about her beloved flowers and her little protégés . . . and all the time we are in the garden of the Brinvilliers, and that window to the left there is that of the Marquise's chamber where she plotted to have poor Briancourt murdered by Sainte-Croix, hiding in the great fireplace, surmounted now by a mild-eyed Virgin in plaster! . . . Paris has many astonishing surprises to offer the curious explorer, and this house in the *Rue Charles-V.* is not one of the least strange of the sights our fair Parisiennes may enjoy any day in the course of their wanderings about the good city of Paris.

THE IMPASSE VILLEHARDOUIN

ON Thursday, 22nd October, 1812,—the very day on which the French Army, flying before the flames, evacuated Moscow and began the disastrous Russian retreat,—a non-commissioned officer of the Paris garrison came to give the watchword to General Malet, detained as a political prisoner in the private hospital of Doctor Dubuisson, near the *Barrière du Trône*, at the farther end of the *Faubourg Saint-Antoine*; ¹ the watchword, by a strange coincidence, was “Conspiracy,” and the rallying signal was “Compiègne”. The General, who had long been preparing his *coup d'état*, understood that the hour had struck for action; but nothing betrayed his purpose.

At six o'clock, he dined as usual with the Doctor's other boarders. The conversation at dessert passed in criticisms of the *Jerusalem Delivered* then playing at the Imperial Academy of Music, in discussions as to the merits of Mlle. Mars and Mlle. Leverd, of the *Théâtre-Français*, and praises of the wonderful stag Coco, the star of the *Cirque Franconi*; surprise was expressed at no news having arrived from the front for more than a fortnight;

¹ *Archives nationales*.—Dossier Malet, F 6499, police générale. 7th July, 1810,—petition of Malet to the Emperor. He recapitulates his services; e.g. : “In the year 1806, commanding a body of French troops in the Roman States between the Tiber and Naples, he chases and drives back the hordes of brigands commanded by Fra Diavolo”.

the fluctuations of the five per cents., for the moment at eighty-two, were enlarged on, and the announcement of a victory was prophesied for the morrow. Malet played his usual rubber of whist and retired about ten o'clock the winner of a few counters.

Never had the General appeared more unconcerned. After withdrawing to his room, he waited till the house was quiet; then, at eleven o'clock, in pouring rain, he crossed the garden, opened the gate with a duplicate key he had got possession of, and walked smartly away. The Abbé Lafon, a Royalist deacon, like the General detained a prisoner for political reasons, followed suit, carrying under his arm a thick portfolio stuffed with papers,—the official documents of the new Government which Malet hoped to substitute for the Imperial régime.

In all haste the General and the Abbé traversed the length of the *Faubourg Saint-Antoine*—it was raining in cataracts,—crossed the *Place de la Bastille*, then by way of the *Place Royale* and the *Rue des Minimes* reached the *Rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles*. A little short of the *Rue Saint-Louis*, they turned to the right; before them lay the entrance to a narrow alley, the *Passage Saint-Pierre*, into which they dived. A few steps more brought them to another alley, a short, muddy cul-de-sac; at the far end stood a gloomy building, the most forbidding in the forbidding place; they pushed open the door, and rapidly climbing three flights of steps, found themselves on a narrow landing; a door opened on their right.

Their host was a Spanish priest, "with a yellow pock-marked face," a bilious complexion and a startled look, and speaking broken French. He had only been four months out of the prison of *La Force*, where he had



Impasse Villehardouin, in 1906

spent four years. He was called the Abbé Caamano, "a highly suspicious person and without visible means of subsistence," so ran a police report. For a month he had been lodging in this remote district, one that, from a conspirator's point of view, however, offered many advantages,—no neighbours, no inquisitive visitors, a house standing by itself surrounded by Religious Houses and vast deserted gardens, regions of mystery and silence, yet within two steps of the Boulevards; this in 1812 meant utter solitude, perfect country quietude!

Nowadays the *Rue Saint-Louis* is called *Rue de Turenne*, the *Rue* and *cul-de-sac Saint-Pierre* are known as *Rue* and *Impasse Villehardouin*, and the blind alley itself where the Abbé Caamano lurked is to disappear very shortly, and with it will be demolished the house where the prologue of this amazing drama was enacted.

Once within Caamano's rooms—he had made his acquaintance through the Abbé Lafon—Malet opened the window and made sure he had not been followed. Then he dated a number of orders drawn up beforehand, signed and sealed various papers, "ate a morsel of food and drank a glass of bordeaux". The rain was still falling; the General put on his uniform, which lay all ready on the



General Malet

Abbé's bed,¹ Mme. Malet having had everything necessary conveyed to the *cul-de-sac Saint-Pierre* some hours before. A third accomplice, Boutreux, a poet and a visionary (his card as a student of law is among the papers at the Archives), who was to play the part of a Commissary of Police, merely donned over his civilian clothes a tricolour scarf purchased the day before at the Palais-Royal. It was now half-past eleven; at that moment hurried footsteps were heard on the stairs, and a man, in a state of absolute nudity, rushes into the little room. It was one Rateau, a corporal in the *Garde de Paris*, of the same age as Boutreux, *viz.*, twenty-eight, who appeared in this guise at the place appointed by Malet. In the lashing rain Rateau, dressed in his uniform, had hailed a *fiacre* in the *Place du Louvre*, at eleven o'clock, and ordered the driver, cursing and swearing the while, to put him down in the *cul-de-sac Saint-Pierre*. . . . On arriving there, what was the amazement of the cabman to see the fare he had taken up in the *Place du Louvre*, spring out of the vehicle stark naked, carrying his clothes under his arm. . . . Rateau, in his eagerness to don as soon as possible the fine blue uniform of an orderly officer which the General had promised him,² had deemed it the most natural thing in the world

¹ Malet's uniform and pocketbook had been brought by Boutreux to Caamano's lodgings. Boutreux had been to fetch them from Mme. Malet's bearing a note from the General.—Dossier Malet.

From Mme. Malet (née de Balay): "I have been in confinement since 23rd October; the name I bear is my only crime."—*Ibid.*

² In the last days of September, 1812, a Corporal of the *Garde de Paris*, being on duty at the *Odéon* Theatre told a certain Collin (popularly known as Verdure), an officer on half pay, commanding the guard at the *Odéon* Theatre and living in Paris, *Rue Neuve-Guillemain*, No. 7, as they walked up and down together under the peristyle of the house during the performance, that he hoped not to remain much longer a Corporal, that he knew a General who would make him an Officer and take him as his "aide-de-camp."—*Archives nationales*.—Dossier Malet, F 7, 6500.

to strip in the cab. Malet looked at his watch; he was very calm and had merely substituted the epaulettes of a General of Division for his own as a General of Brigade. A steaming bowl of punch stood on the chimney-piece. . . .

"Now, gentlemen, the hour is come!"

At that moment the Abbé Lafon was seized with a sudden panic, and wanted to fly:

Ce rapport Citoyen Ministre, est basé sur la plus exacte vérité et si ce succès n'a pas été plus de suite, c'est que cela a tenu à des points particuliers, dont je vous prie de vouloir bien vouloir actuellement les confier. mon Me, je dois avoir rempli ma mission d'une manière distinguée pour que dans trois Combats que j'ai eus avec l'ennemi, j'ai toujours battu, qu'il a perdu beaucoup de monde et moi très peu. — vous pouvez juger actuellement, Citoyen Ministre si cette conduite mérite de vous être présentée la grande dans laquelle je l'ai tenue. —

Salut à la République

Malet

Autograph of General Malet

"Too late," was all Malet said . . . "the guillotine is at the door! . . . Forward all!"

Our band of conspirators vanished in the darkness. It was close on four in the morning, and the rain was still coming down.

The public is familiar with the incredible episodes that followed in the course of the amazing adventure. At half-past four, Malet, in the courtyard of the Popincourt barracks, orders the tenth cohort to form square, and proclaims: the death of the Emperor, "slain under the walls of Moscow," the abolition of the Imperial régime and the establishment of a Provisional Government comprising General Moreau, Carnot, Augereau, Malet, Volney, Mathieu de Montmorency, etc.¹

The Colonel, Soulier, is cajoled and won over, while Generals Lahory and Guidal are released from the prison of *La Force*.² There a few hours later their place was taken by the Minister of Police, Savary, who, bewildered and half dead with terror, told his gaoler:—

"I can make nothing of what is going on. . . . God knows how it's all going to end! Give me victuals, lock me up in a remote cell . . . and throw the key down the well!"

¹ "At about four in the morning the Sergeant-Major came to the sleeping-room and ordered us all to fall in on parade in full uniform." (Evidence of Corporal Prévot of the Tenth Cohort.)—*Archives nationales*.—Dossier Malet, F 7, 6500.

"Bézi, Sub-Lieutenant, was with his company at the time of the reading of the false orders, but he declares that before the actual reading began, he had, on hearing of his Majesty's death, an indisposition which compelled him to go to the rear, that he only came back when the end of the proclamation (*sénatus-consulte*) was being read, and he thought the orders had emanated from the lawful authorities." (Signed: The Minister of War, Duc de Feltre.)—*Ibid*.

² "We arrived by the *Rue Saint-Antoine* in the street leading to *La Force*, we passed in front of the Gate and the door of the guardroom, which is to one side; they were drawn up in fighting trim. I saw the aide-de-camp come out of the guardroom and go and speak to the General; then, after some while, two or three persons issued from the Main Gate, the first of whom I thought would never have done embracing Malet." (Evidence of Gomont, Sub-Lieutenant of the Tenth Cohort.)—*Ibid*.

Before long Pasquier, the Préfet of Police, and Desmarets, the Secretary General, joined Savary in gaol. As to Frochot, a man "born to be préfet and resolved to endure anything and everything to save his post," Malet recognised him for what he was and kept him in office. He was jogging quietly into Paris from his country house when a messenger handed him a note containing the fateful words: "Be quick, be quick, *Fuit Imperator!*" (The Emperor is dead.) Frochot hurries back to his post, and it is Colonel Soulier, an unwitting accomplice, who receives him at the Préfecture, and conveys the orders of the new Government to him. Frochot bows and charges his subordinates "to obey all orders they might receive." . . . All was going for the best; General Hulin, Commandant of Paris, having indiscreetly asked to see the original orders, had had his jaw broken by Malet with a pistol shot.¹ It was after this that the Paris street-boys, impudent as always, got hold of the phrase 'Bouffela-Balle,' to describe the stout hero of the Bastille!—In fact Malet seemed on the point of triumphal success.

It was at the General Staff Office, in the *Place Vendôme*, that the catastrophe befell. The Adjutant-Major Laborde and the Commandant Doucet, Chief of the Staff, hesitate and look as if they smelt a rat. "The General, who is watching them, feels he has not a moment to spare

¹ "Malet halted us for a moment opposite Saint-Roch and went to say a word at the wineseller's shop which still stands at the corner of the *Rue de la Convention*. On our reaching the street leading to the *Place Vendôme*, he halted us in front of the hairdresser's next door to Rimbault's wineshop, and then before M. le Comte Hulin's door. As I am rather short, I stood up on tiptoe to see where a woman's screams I could hear came from. . . . It was Mme. Hulin."—*Archives nationales*.—Dossier Malet, F 7, 6500.

and loosens his pistols . . . but a mirror at his back betrays what he is after.' Malet is seized, disarmed, bound and gagged! Guidal is arrested at table, Lahory at the Ministry of Police, where he was busy signing orders, and the two prisoners who had been released at seven, returned at half-past eleven to *La Force* to take the places of the men they had themselves incarcerated about nine!

By noon all was over. Next day the Ministers showed themselves at the Opéra, and Cambacérès gave a magnificent banquet to his Colleagues at the *Rocher de Cancale* in the *Rue Montorgueil*.

The Imperial justice was swift and sure. On 27th October, Malet and twenty-four of his companions appeared before a Military Commission. Not a single Advocate had been found bold enough to undertake such a case, and the General defended himself. Some of his haughty answers will be remembered:—

"Who were your accomplices?" the President Dejean asked him.

"All France . . . including yourself, sir, if I had been successful! . . ."

Invited to speak in his defence, Malet rose to his feet and uttered merely the words: "A man who has constituted himself the defender of the rights of his country has no need to plead his case. . . . He triumphs or dies!"—and sat down again.

At five in the morning the Commission pronounced fourteen death sentences, and on Thursday, 29th October 1812, at half-past three in the afternoon, in dark rainy weather, six hackney-coaches, escorted by gendarmes, set off at a smart trot to carry the condemned men to the *Plaine de Grenelle*, the regular place for executions at that period.

The drums beat, and Malet and his accomplices set their backs against the ramparts of the outer boulevard bounding the precincts of the École Militaire. Then the General, overmastering with his voice of command the protests and complaints of his companions cried: "It is to me belongs the honour of commanding here. . . . Make ready, firing party! . . . present, fire!" and more than a hundred balls crashed into the band of brave men, at point blank range.

An old soldier, who had had no remotest inkling of the meaning of the terrible drama in which he had been an unwitting actor, one Captain Borderieux, actually died shouting "Vive l'Empereur!" . . . Streaming with blood, but still keeping his feet, Malet only dropped at the second volley, acclaiming the name of Liberty!¹

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We were anxious to revisit the *Impasse Villehardouin*, the not inappropriate scene where the prologue of this tragic drama was enacted. It is a narrow alley, filthy and malodorous, a few yards long and blocked at the end by a gloomy wall. At the foot of this barrier, in the mud, an apprentice-lad is knocking together some packing cases with a hammer. The last house on the left is marked No. 2. Yes, that is the place. At the end of a dark passage is a narrow wooden staircase, shiny with dirt, the worn, uneven steps of which seem to cheat the visitor's tread.

¹ "Note to the Minister of Police. The Councillor of State, Préfet of Police, informs Your Excellency that this affair of Malet, Guidal, Lahorie, has suggested the idea to him that it would be desirable to recover from the hands of the old clothes dealers of Paris all the uniforms of Officers of Rank that might happen to be amongst their stock.

Answer: But how pay for them?"—*Archives nationales*.

Answer: "To take the names and addresses of purchasers who buy them and communicate them to the Police Commissary of the District." Follow denunciations of certain clothes dealers.—*Ibid*.

Let us mount to the third floor. Three doors open on a confined landing; on the right is the one by which Malet walked quietly into the Abbé Caamano's room. . . . We follow his example,—to be greeted by a very unpleasant smell; the place has not been cleaned up yet, and three tiny children are playing with bits of rag in the room where words of such serious import were exchanged. The floor is littered with pots and pans; on the walls, beside sticky-looking oleographs, hang several pipe-racks; on the chest of drawers, a model made of corks represents a ruined temple amidst a vaguely indicated Roman campagna; on the marble mantelpiece of Louis XIV. date stand a row of pickle bottles. The children stare with big eyes of astonishment and amusement at the inquisitive strangers who have invaded their domicile. A family of canaries are singing with might and main in a cage suspended between the two windows giving on the *Impasse*.

As we leave the house, a row of peering faces bends over the balustrades. The light falls askance on them, as it must have done on the features of the agents of Fouché and Réal when they invaded Caamano's lodging the day after Malet's arrest. In a moment of indiscretion, over a glass of wine at Tachera's, a blind man who kept a restaurant in the *Rue de la Corderie*, the coachman George described his amazement when he saw his eccentric fare spring out of his *fiacre* in the primitive costume before mentioned, and this gave the Police the clue they had been so keenly on the alert for, and ended in their discovering the place where the conspiracy had originated. The house was ransacked thoroughly from top to bottom, from basement to attic. In Caamano's fireplace was found a great heap of ashes, and amongst them several orderly

buttons, coming from Rateau's uniform, who was in just as fierce a hurry to get rid of his fine clothes as he had originally been to put them on. . . . The cage was empty, Caamano safe in prison, the Abbé Lafon vanished into thin air. . . .¹ The well was dragged, and a sabre and two swords fished up, and the whole Imperial Police force craned their necks over the well head, or well heads, common to the two adjoining premises, Nos. 2 and 4.—The well in question has disappeared; a rusty pulley and some cramps fixed in the partition wall are all the vestiges that now remain to be seen. Above our heads rise, dark and dismal, the five floors of the squalid building; there is a pervading smell of neglect and damp and abject poverty.

One must have learned something of the story of this swift and overwhelming tragedy to experience any special emotion on treading the greasy flags of this confined yard, barely ten feet long and less than seven wide, a sort of cesspool where the very daylight is jaundiced. But with this knowledge, the memories evoked seem only the more tragic in face of these mean miry walls, when we recall the bloody scene of the *Plaine de Grenelle* and the rampart pitted with bullets. . . .

¹ On August, 1814, a letter from the Secretary General of Police put at the disposition of M. l'Abbé Lafon, 38 *Rue de Charenton*, "positive information as to the sentence on General Malet".—*Archives nationales*.—Dossier Malet.

THE RUE DES BARRES

SAINT-GERVAIS—THE RUE GRENIER-SUR-L'EAU—THE RUE
GEOFFROY-L'ASNIER

THE day of 9 Thermidor, year II., which witnessed the end of the Terror and the fall of Robespierre, was equally disastrous to the *citoyen* Courvol, Crier of the National Convention. A report addressed by this unfortunate functionary to the "Representative" Courtois will fully satisfy us on this point: On 9 Thermidor, at midday, I was directed to convey a decree to the Hôtel de Ville¹ directing the Mayor of Paris, the National

¹The present Hôtel de Ville, one of the finest and most elegant buildings of Paris, is entirely modern in construction, though a replica, enlarged and enriched, of the old, historic Hôtel de Ville, in which the stirring events of 9 Thermidor described in the text occurred, and which was burnt to the ground by the Communards in 1871. The rebuilding covered the years 1876-84.

The old Hôtel de Ville was begun in 1533, but was not completed before the reign of Henri IV., at the beginning of the following century. It was repeatedly enlarged,—the last time in 1841.

The building occupies the East side of the open square formerly known as the *Place de Grève*, the principal, though not the only, scene of executions for many centuries, now renamed the *Place de l'Hôtel de Ville*.

It has figured conspicuously in successive revolutions, having always served as the rallying place of the popular faction. "On 14th July, 1789, the captors of the Bastille were conducted in triumph into the great hall. Three days later Louis XVI. came in procession from Versailles to the Hôtel de Ville under the protection of Bailly and other popular deputies, thus publicly testifying his submission to the will of the National Assembly. . . . On 27th July, 1794 (9 Thermidor), when the *Commune*, the tool em-

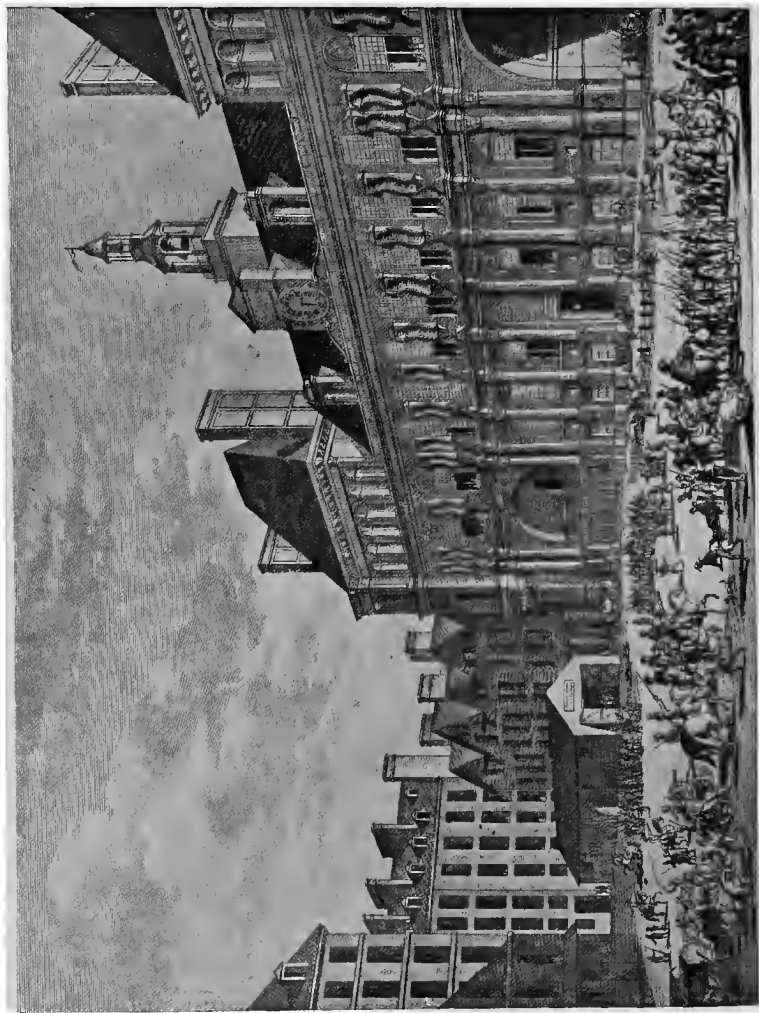
Agent and the abandoned Henriot to appear at the bar of the Convention. . . . As authorised by right and usage, I asked the Mayor to give me a receipt for the decree; just as he was going to write it, Henriot snatched the pen out of his hand, shouting: "Go to the devil! people don't give receipts at such a time as this. Go and tell your d——d scoundrels that we are here deliberating how to purge them." (*Nota bene*, he was already drunk.)—Then turning to the gendarmes, "Keep a hold on that fellow," he ordered gruffly. It was only by dint of cunning I managed, after an hour and a half, to get myself released. . . . When I got back to the Convention, Thuriot, who occupied the President's chair and to whom I proceeded to render account of my commis-

ployed by Robespierre against the Convention, was holding one of its meetings here, Barras with five battalions forced his entrance in the name of the Convention. . . . Here was also celebrated the union of the July Monarchy with the bourgeoisie, when Louis-Philippe presented himself at one of the windows, in August, 1830, and in view of the populace embraced Lafayette. From the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, on 24th February, 1848, Louis Blanc proclaimed the institution of the Republic. From 4th September, 1870, to 28th February, 1871, the Hôtel de Ville was the seat of the 'gouvernement de la défense nationale,' and from 19th March to 22nd May, 1871, that of the Communards and their 'comité du salut public.'

"The Hôtel de Ville having been doomed to destruction by the leaders of the Commune, heaps of combustibles, steeped in petroleum, and barrels of gunpowder were placed in various parts of the building. . . . On the morning of 24th May a fearful struggle began in the *Place de l'Hôtel de Ville*, and it was protracted without intermission until the following morning. As the insurgents were gradually driven back, they gave vent to their rage and despair by setting on fire many of the surrounding buildings, and finally ignited the combustibles in the Hôtel de Ville, although about 600 of their party were still within its precincts. The troops, now masters of the whole neighbourhood and granting no quarter, directed an incessant fire against the unhappy occupants, all of whom perished." [Transl.]

sion, answered me: "Go and be d——d! so much the worse for you! Give me some peace, do!"¹

These brutal and insulting replies, twice thrown in the teeth of the worthy Courvol, a man and a "*huissier*," could only be excused, if excused at all, by the appalling hurricane let loose at the moment over Paris and driving all men frantic, the duel to the death being fought out that day between the party of the Terror and the Moderates. The swiftly changing phases of the Titanic struggle are familiar,—the Convention outlaws, and then arrests in full sitting, Robespierre, his brother, Saint-Just, Lebas, Couthon and their accomplices, the Sections release the prisoners and bring them in triumph to the "*Maison Commune*," the *Place de Grève* is filled with crowds carrying bayonets and pikes and dragging cannon, Robespierre hangs undecided, hesitating to sign the call to arms, to unchain the insurrection. The Convention on the other hand, declared itself *en permanence*, and fully expected to be murdered where they sat; Collot d'Herbois, who was acting as President, wore his hat in sign of distress and danger, and Durand-Maillane confessed next day "he had never believed himself nearer his end". Eventually the Convention resolves to take the offensive. Representatives, plumed and scarfed, and escorted by gendarmes and officers carrying torches, proclaim through the streets and squares of Paris the "outlawry of the rebels". In beating rain and fearful heat two columns, led by Barras, Léonard Bourdon, Laurent Lecointre and Fréron, march upon the Hôtel de Ville,—one following the *Quais*, to attack in front from the *Place de Grève*, the other taking the line of the *Rue Saint-Honoré*.



Hotel de Ville, on 9 Thermidor

At half-past one in the morning the troops surrounded the building, in which the Council of Insurrection still sat over their deliberations. It was at this crisis that the gendarme Meda,—nicknamed *Veto*, a youth of nineteen,—without uniform, with blazing eyes, holding a brace of pistois concealed inside his shirt and supported merely by three or four grenadiers, sprang up the stairs leading to the *Cabinet Vert*,—close to the Throne Room,—where were assembled the two Robespierres and their most trusty partisans. Though representing himself as “on secret service” of the last importance, it was only through a storm of blows and threats and insults that Meda succeeded in forcing his way up the staircase which was thronged with “stalwarts” and “die-hards” and “Incorruptibles”. Reaching the door at last, he throws it open and hurls himself upon Robespierre, “threatens him with the point of his sabre at his heart, takes one of his pistols in the left hand, and seizing the other with his right, fires it off at him”. At least that is what he says in the fanfaronading account he has left of his exploits.¹

. . . A few minutes later the troops were pouring into the Hôtel de Ville. Lebas blew out his brains; the cripple Couthon, paralysed from the waist downwards, dragging his inert limbs after him and using his hands as crutches, hid under a table. Meantime Dumas, who only the day before had sat as president of the Revolutionary Tribunal, was smelling at a flask of mint-water, which a spy of the Committees snatched out of his hands, “thinking it was poison;” while Saint-Just, impassive and dignified, “his eyes big with sorrow,” watched his friends

¹ *Précis historique des événements du 9 Thermidor*, by Meda, ex-gendarme.

dying around him. Robespierre, his broken jaw hanging loose, lay stretched at the foot of the speaker's tribune. "He did not move, but breathed stertorously and his forehead wrinkled all over." He was the butt of all sorts of insults: "Sire, is Your Majesty in pain?"—"There's a fine King for you!"—"To the kennel with him!"—



Hôtel de Ville in 1830

"Stand aside, do, and let 'em see how prettily their King sleeps."¹ Robespierre the younger had vaulted out of one of the windows opening on the *Place de Grève*,—which was still lighted by the street lamps kindled at ten o'clock by order of the Commune;²—he had taken off his shoes and

¹ Report of Courtois: Note supplied by Fréron.

² Evidence of Bochard, Concierge of the Hôtel de Ville (Report of Courtois).

held them in his hand while he climbed along the cornice outside. He could hear the shouts of acclamation that greeted the triumph of the Convention ; then leaping for the points of the bayonets he could see gleaming below him, he crashed head-first on to the steps of the Great Staircase, injuring in his fearful fall two citizens, one of whom, a man named Chabru, was almost killed by the violence of the impact ! The young Revolutionary was taken up, horribly mutilated, but still breathing.

The body of Lebas is buried in the *Cimetière Saint-Paul* ; Couthon, half dead and bound on a litter, Henriot, dragged out of a sewer where he had run to earth, covered with mire and blood, full of bayonet wounds and one eye hanging out of its socket, Robespierre, his clothes in ribbons, shoeless and his stockings dangling about his ankles, his head wrapped in bloodstained rags, Saint-Just, impassive as ever, unruffled and disdainful, are removed, some to the Hôtel-Dieu to receive first aid for their injuries, the rest to the *Conciergerie* to be locked up. When two o'clock struck that morning, the tragedy was finished ; the *citoyen* Legendre locked the doors of the Hôtel de Ville, now silent and empty, and put the keys in his pocket !

Then presently the little *Rue des Barres*, usually so dark and calm and peaceful, was filled with lights and shouts and ugly cries in the darkness of the early morning. Shutters were warily opened, and pale anxious faces thrust out of the windows, gazing with horror at the dreadful sight of a man bathed in blood, with shattered limbs, being carried by in a chair to the Sectional Committee sitting *en permanence* at the *Hôtel des Barres* (formerly so called), near the *Quai de la Grève*. The President, Gali-

bert, and the Secretary-Clerk, Pajot, then put it on record "that the individual was the *citoyen* Robespierre the younger, Deputy of the Convention, dangerously wounded, almost lifeless and not in a condition to be transported without risk before the Committee of Public Safety". Notwithstanding the order soon arrived to convey him thither, "no matter what condition he may be in"; and the unhappy man was carried in the midst of a howling mob to the Tuileries! . . . The same evening, at seven o'clock, all were guillotined.¹

The house has disappeared, demolished on the formation of the *Rue du Pont-Louis-Philippe*, but the *Rue des Barres* has preserved its tragic look. Dark, narrow and crooked, perched as it were above the neighbouring alleys, it begins towards the Seine with a sharp uphill slope and ends at the *Rue François-Miron* in a stairway of seven stone steps. Half way up the incline, the chief and only ornament of the street, stands the dark porch with its rain-washed pillars of one of the doors of the Church of *Saint-Gervais*. Plain and severe in style, dark and mysterious in the dim light of its painted windows, it is one of the few Paris churches that keep something of the homely, quiet charm of a village sanctuary. Bossuet preached from its

¹ "The death-carts appeared. They contained twenty-one doomed men. In the first rode Couthon, Henriot, and beside Robespierre the mutilated and bleeding remains of his brother who was dying for him! Saint-Just, calm as ever, was buried in his own thoughts. The dead body of Le Bas closed the procession. As Robespierre went by, the gendarmes pointed at him with their sabres, and the people shouted, 'Death to the tyrant,'—and the man who uttered the cry with the most savage fury was Carrier!"—*Histoire Parlementaire*, vol. xxxiv., p. 96.

"A woman pushed forward, screaming out: 'Go, villain, go down to Hell, with the curses of every wife and every mother on your head!'"—Nougaret, vol. iv., p. 343.

pulpit, Mme. de Sévigné was married there, Philippe de Champagne, Scarron, Crébillon were buried there.

To the left of the Church-door in the corner of the little open space, at No. 2 in the *Rue François-Miron*, push open an old door of a dirty green surmounted by the canary-yellow signboard of a firm of furniture removers ; it hides one of the most picturesque bits anywhere to be found. After mounting four well-worn steps and traversing a dark vaulted passage-way, you will be surprised to see a row of old buildings of the seventeenth century, small and squat, squeezed one against the other, and black with the smoke and grime of years. These low-browed hovels seem incrustated as it were on the towering wall, rich with Gothic carving and bristling with gargoyles, of the square tower of Saint-Gervais. Meagre windows, guarded by a double fence of rusty iron bars, dusty gratings stopped with clumsy cross-pieces of wood, through which emerge stumpy stove-pipes, give on a confined passage-way, from which open a row of narrow doors that are more like slits in the grimy wall.

It is a relic of the outbuildings formerly attached to the Church ; all the rest has disappeared or been altered beyond recognition. Thus at No. 15 in the *Rue des Barres* a confectioner has installed his furnaces and boilers and basins of ruddy copper in the desecrated remains of an old Chapel. Caramels and almond drops and fondants are being made under Gothic vaults of the fifteenth century, alongside carved pillars that are still blackened with the smoke of tapers burnt by the Faithful before the altar !

On the first floor the windows of an eating-room open upon the marvellous prospect offered by the Church roof—a labyrinth of gargoyles and pinnacles and flying but-



The *Charniers* (Mortuary Chapels) of the Church of Saint-Gervais

tresses, through the openwork of which glimpses of hazy distance can be caught. Swallows fly twittering amid this



Rue Grenier-sur-l'Eau

forest of stone.

Carillon chimes set the air and the very windows vibrating, and the Angelus bell rings out, seeming to speak the mystic language of another world.

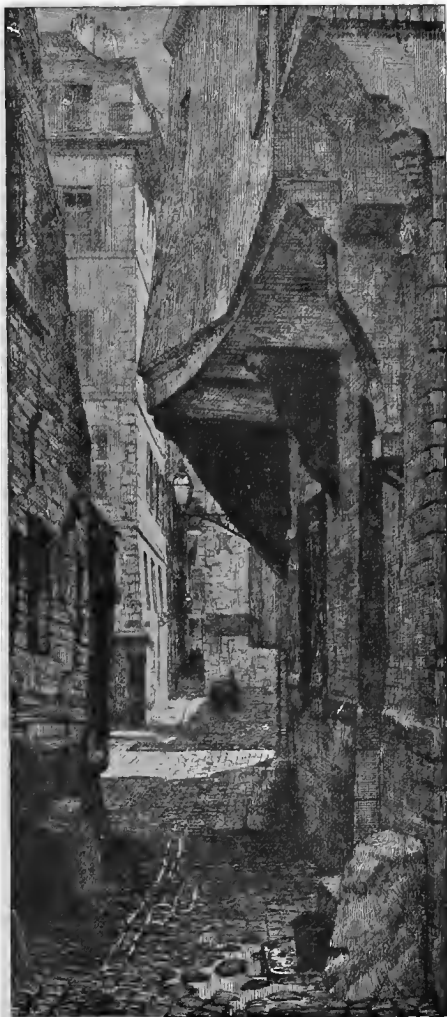
One's thoughts are instinctively carried back several centuries . . . and it is a cruel surprise, on leaving the quiet place, to find one-self facing the *Rue Grenier-sur-l'Eau*, which looks like a cleft, a black gully, between two rows of leprous, tumble-down houses.

Publicans and

cobblers have made the street their own. You can find lodgings for the night there, and get your throat cut into the bargain ; only a few months ago two "bullies" mur-

dered an unfortunate there. The girl's arm was tattooed with the motto : "Gégène has my heart, till death us do part" ; she met her death for the crime of not having "sent tobacco and pocket - money " to the aforesaid Gégène, who was "doing time" in gaol.

This grim street opens into the *Rue Geoffroy-l'Asnier*, where once stood sumptuous Palaces inhabited by families bearing the noblest names, —Preuilly, Clermont-Gallerande, Breteuil, La Rochefoucauld, Galliffet. A few doorways of proud and stately proportions, two or



Rue Geoffroy-l'Asnier

three dilapidated balconies, some broken bits of carving, still bear witness to this past splendour.¹ At No. 26 is the beautiful entrance gate of the *Hôtel Châlons-Luxembourg*; almost unaltered, the house stands imposingly between a stately courtyard with ivy-mantled walls and still showing its old stone posts joined together by bars of iron, that in former days guarded the ruddy brick and carved stone-work against the shock of coach-wheels, and on the other front a delightful garden overgrown with greenery.

It is a fragment of wreckage from the *Grand Siècle* rising in this poor, squalid quarter. Instinctively we call up the rough figures of the hardy Captains and sour-faced *Parlementaires* who must have haunted it in those days, and above all the graceful shades of the fair *Précieuses* who swept its floors with their silken trains and displayed their stiff brocaded stomachers beneath its lofty ceilings. . . . But alas! what a disillusion awaits one on coming out, to find underneath the richly carved scutcheons of the entrance a tavern sign, on which the publican who occupies the noble old building advertises "vin d'Aude at 10 centimes the glass" for the benefit of his thirsty customers!

¹ Also noteworthy: No. 22, fine carved doorway; No. 20, Hôtel of M. de Vilemontré (1668) and of J.-B. de Machault (1713); No 19, remains of the *Hôtel de Preuilly*; other curious old houses at Nos. 1, 4, 9 and 42.—(De Rochegude.)

SAINT-MERRI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE RUES PIERRE-AU-LARD, BRISE-MICHE AND TAILLE-
PAIN, THE RUE DE VENISE, THE RUE QUINCAMPOIX

THE dawn of 6th June, 1832, broke stormy and threatening over Paris, and when the first beams of day brightened the housetops, there could be seen in the *Rue Saint-Martin*, a few yards from the Church of *Saint-Merri* and at the intersection of the *Rue Aubry-le-Boucher*, a handful of men, haggard and tattered, their eyes blazing with fever, grouped behind a blood-stained barricade above which floated the red flag. Before them, all about them, lying at their very feet, were the bodies of the dead, National Guards riddled with bullets, torn with knives, crushed under paving-stones and heavy pieces of furniture hurled from the neighbouring roofs, bearing mute witness to the savage struggle that, beginning the evening before about five o'clock, had been protracted far into the night. Over the insurgents' heads boomed the melancholy tones of the great "*tocsin*" of *Saint-Merri*.

Following on the burial of General Lamarque, who had died pressing to his lips the sword offered him by the Bonapartist Officers of the Hundred Days, a vast Revolutionary agitation had galvanised Paris. The Secret Societies, at that time powerful and numerous, the sur-

vivors of the Great Revolution, the erstwhile soldiers of the Empire, the malcontents of every party, united by the bond of a common hatred of Louis-Philippe, had met by general consent round the grave of the patriot General. Alike from beneath workmen's blouses and citizens' black coats could be seen peeping pistol-butts and dagger-hilts, mere boys might be observed loading firearms, using for wads the posters on the walls, the pupils of the *École Polytechnique* had forced the gates and come to join the fierce threatening crowd that accompanied the funeral car. The Maréchal Soult, Minister of War, was full of apprehension and had turned out the whole garrison of Paris and the National Guard to boot. The scent of battle was in the air. Hostilities broke out with brutal, ferocious suddenness, and for a brief while the insurgents were masters of the heart of Paris; they encamped triumphantly beside the Hôtel de Ville, which they tried desperately to seize. All night long the mutual slaughter went on; then, one after the other, the Government troops recaptured the positions the enemy had forced. Only one, the great barricade of *Saint-Merri*, still held out; its defenders, about 130 in number, grouped round an old "hero of July," Jeanne by name, had already repulsed half a score furious assaults. Resolved to sell their lives dearly, they awaited the final attack, well knowing that the day just dawning would mark their last hour on earth.

In the alleys and crossways and mean streets that lay about them, they could hear the "general muster" sounded, and those loud, vague sounds that show a great body of men is making preparations for attack; farther away cavalry could be seen galloping, and artillery waggons



Saint-Merri

rumbling over the paving-stones. As the sun rose higher, the din and confusion grew and grew, while the great bell of *Saint-Merri*, booming on unceasingly, seemed to be sounding their passing knell. . . . From six in the morning assault followed quick on assault; shots rained from the windows and roofs and even cellar-gratings of the houses; so thick was the smoke, the wretches so busy killing each other in the semi-darkness could not see ten yards in front of them! Balls, grapeshot, bullets sent the stonework and plaster of the walls flying in showers, and splinters from the paving flags were shot up like hail. A formidable detachment of the army of Paris had to be detailed to reduce this one barricade, whose last remaining defenders, red with blood and black with powder, dying of hunger and thirst, at end of ammunition and supplies, were perishing before closed doors, beneath the blazing sun of a June day. About six in the evening the barricade was rushed from three sides at once, and the troops, closing in with furious impetuosity, swarmed up the piled flags, slippery with blood. Jeanne and the last surviving insurgents tried to open themselves a passage with the bayonet; the greater part were killed on the spot, the rest, wounded and bleeding, escaped over the roofs of the neighbouring houses.

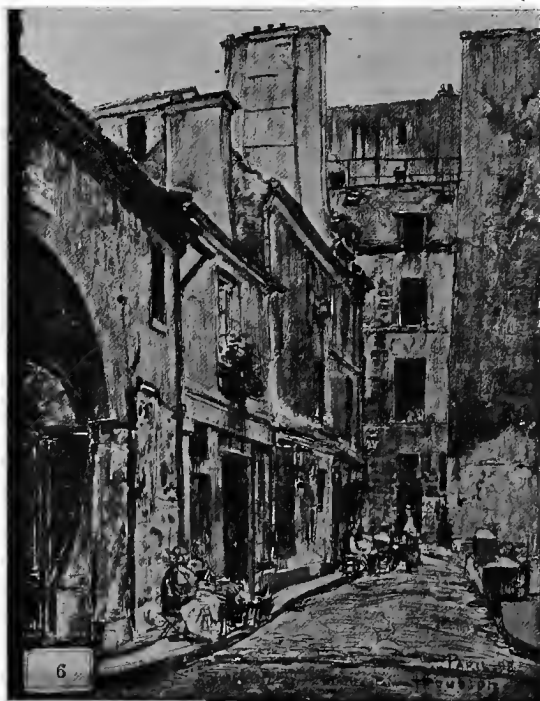
Next day profound peace reigned in Paris; the city was subdued and submissive. Only a long black line of weeping women, visiting the Morgue to identify the bodies of the unknown victims of the fray, testified to the savage fury of yesterday's internecine struggle.

The *Quartier Saint-Merri*, the scene of this sanguinary drama, has altered little, and it is still quite easy to find the marks of the balls that pitted the housefronts

abutting on the Church. At the same time these sudden risings were of such frequent occurrence in the reign of Louis-Philippe that Paris seemed at last to take them as a matter of course. The insurrection ended, life resumed its peaceable routine, and the same roof often sheltered the National Guardsman and the Insurgent of the day before. Still cases of friction did sometimes arise. My parents knew an old lady living near Saint-Merri, who for years never passed the door of the tenant occupying the suite below her own without a shudder. Surprise being expressed at this chronic apprehension, she told how one night after an *émeute*—her husband had been fighting all day in the ranks of the National Guard—she saw a hand-litter deposited at the house door covered with a packing-cloth. Frantic and dazed with fright, she dashed out, lifted a corner of the cloth, and recognising in the bleeding, agonised face,—the poor man's jaw was fractured—the features of the lodger underneath: "Ah! what joy!" she cried, "it's you, M. Vitry!" M. Vitry from that day forward had always shown her a certain coldness!

Passing along the *Rue du Cloître-Saint-Merri*, overhung by the projecting gargoyles of the Church, and leaving on our left the narrow *Rue Taille-Pain*, where great black beams cross and re-cross shoring up the dilapidated houses that otherwise would come tumbling down on each other, we make our way into a strange network of mean, narrow, crooked streets, blackened as if by fire, recalling the lanes and blind alleys of Amsterdam, or Gustave Doré's illustrations of Balzac's *Contes Drôlatiques*. The very names date from the Middle Ages;—the *Rue Pierre-au-Lard*, the *Rue Brise-Miche*, the *Rue Taille-*

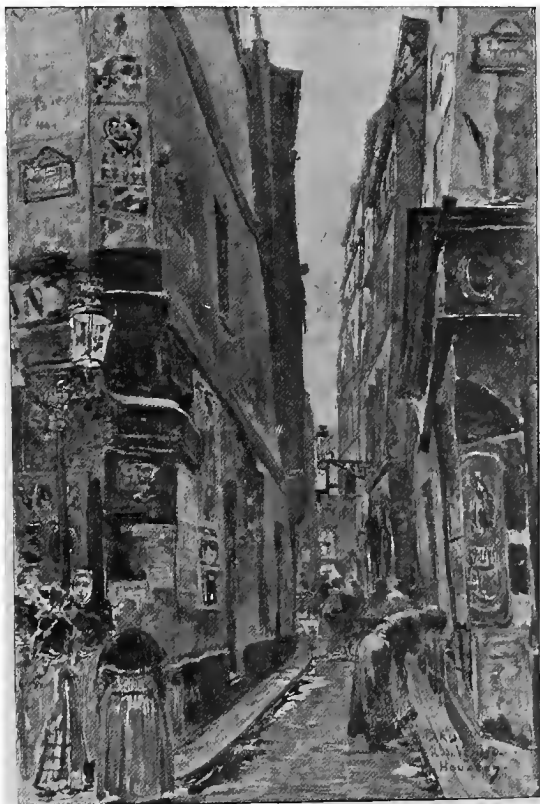
Pain, twist and turn and intersect one another so as to offer the most extraordinarily picturesque vistas. You have to assure yourself it is really and truly the Church of *Saint-Merri* standing out there at the end of the *Rue Brise-Miche* before you can believe yourself within a



Rue Taille-Pain, in 1906

hundred miles of Paris. Handcarts are stabled in old courtyards of the sixteenth century, acrid sulphurous fumes issue through thick bars blocking the windows of an old mansion dropping to pieces under the joint effects

of saltpetre and damp; what can these strange trades be, carried on in these stone casements that look so grim and repellant, guarded by heavy doors studded with rusty nails?



Rue de Venise

Old clothes dealers, rag-pickers, receivers of stolen goods, it may be, inhabit these disreputable streets; hungry-looking curs are nosing the gutters, and a powerful stench of bad wine and onion-stew catches the visitor in the throat.

By way of the *Rue Simon-le-Franc* and the *Rue-Beaubourg* we reach the *Rue de Venise*, a mere cleft as it were between two gloomy walls, even more dismal in appearance than its neighbours. Old mansions of the seventeenth century are let out to lodgers for the night, perfect hotbeds of disease and wretchedness; four lamps advertise these haunts to the tramps and vagabonds in quest of a bed at 30 centimes. A caged blackbird whistles with a rich fluty note where it hangs between two rain-pipes over the pavement littered with cast-off shoes. Within grimy doorways can be made out dark stairways sticky with filth ascending into the blackness above. . . . Yet the other day when we were there,—a startling, living contrast,—three little maids with flaxen heads were decorating a miniature altar in honour of the “*mois de Marie*” in one corner of a fetid drinking-shop, watched with softened eyes by a couple of atrocious harridans. Our day had been full of surprises, and truly this was not the least, or the least agreeable, of them!

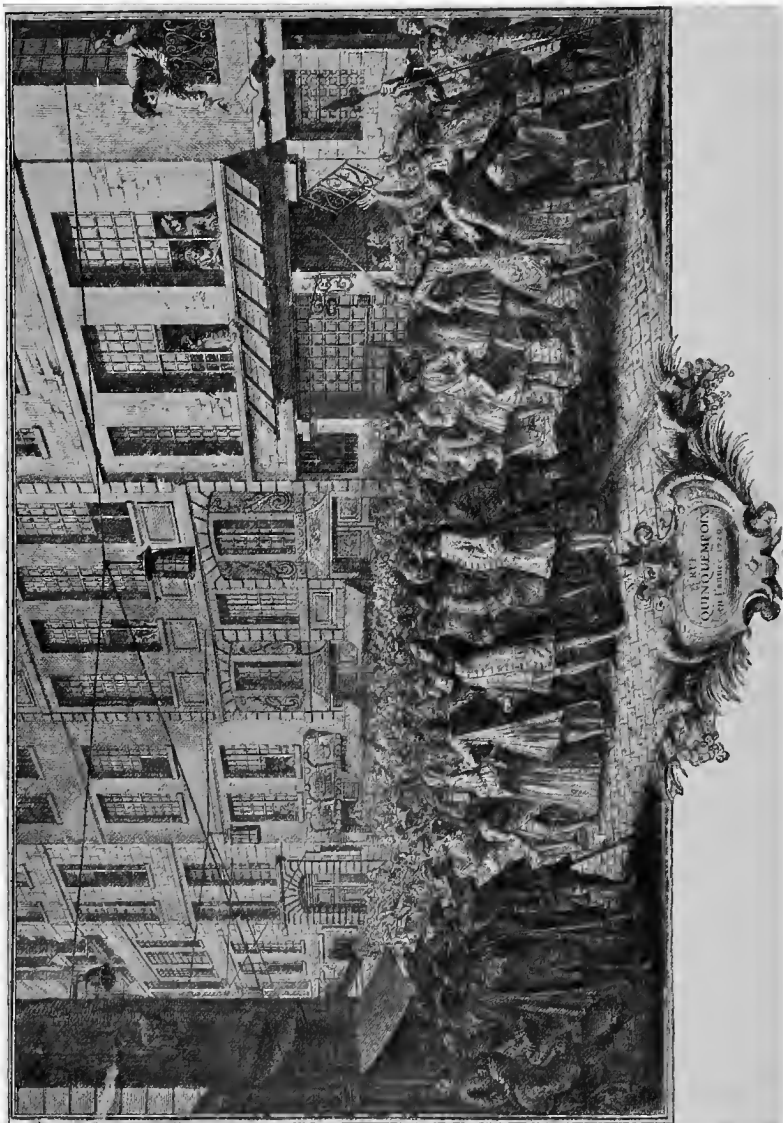
At the corner of the *Rue de Venise* and the *Rue Quincampoix*, at the sign of the “*Arrivée de Venise*,” No. 54, a wineshop-keeper is serving absinthe to four customers lounging in front of a zinc counter. This was in old days the fashionable tavern of the *Épée de Bois*, frequented by Racine, Boileau, Marivaux and their friends. Under the Regency, in 1720, a fearful crime was committed there; the young Comte de Horn, a German Prince related to the Regent, in connivance with two libertines of his acquaintance, murdered a man of wealth named Lacroix in the hope of robbing him.

It was in the days when all Paris had gone mad over

Law's bank and the Mississippi bubble.¹ In this *Rue Quincampoix*, where the Scotch financier had installed his offices, the meanest hovel was worth untold gold; shares were bought and sold in every house in the street, every room was turned into an extemporised stock-exchange. The world was run frantic! Great noblemen, magistrates, dancing-girls, duchesses, shopkeepers, lackeys and pick-pockets, philosophers and courtiers, all gambled without shame or scruple or intermission. A fortune was built up and dissipated in an hour.

All these houses, now occupied by various modest industries, were then, from cellar to attic, "laboratories for minting gold". Shares of 500 livres rose to 18,000, even 20,000! At either end of the *Rue Quincampoix* guards were stationed to regulate the carriage traffic and prevent the crowds crushing one another to death. At No. 90

¹ John Law (of Lauriston), the originator of Law's Bank and the Mississippi Scheme, was born in 1671, being the son of an Edinburgh goldsmith. After a turbulent youth, he fled to the Continent after a duel, in which he had killed his antagonist. Finally settling in Paris, he persuaded the Regent to sanction his financial projects and the establishment of a Bank possessing the right to issue notes. His fundamental idea was that a plentiful supply of circulating medium stimulates trade,—sound enough in itself. But the plan was carried to excess, paper money being issued in reckless quantity without any corresponding reserve of bullion, and inevitably led to panic and disaster. This was hastened on by the combination with the Bank of the Mississippi Company (1719), a wild-cat scheme for the development of the French possessions in Louisiana, and finally precipitated by the Regent's turning against his former protégé. While the mania lasted, the wildest speculation ran riot; fortunes were made and unmade in a day, and scenes were witnessed in the *Rue Quincampoix*, the headquarters of these transactions, comparable, though on a far larger scale, with those of the English "South-Sea Bubble." Law fled from Paris on the collapse of his projects, and eventually died in poverty at Venice. [Transl.]



the Watch rang a bell every night when the hour struck for clearing the street !

C'était la Régence alors
 Et, sans hyperbole,
 Pour les plus drôles de corps
 La France était folle ;
 Tous les hommes plaisaient
 Et les femmes se prêtaient . . .
 A la gaudriole au gué,
 A la gaudriole.¹

To go on at the game, to go on gambling like everybody else, money must be had at any price. Highway robbery became rife, murders, thefts, suicides everyday occurrences . . . in one batch twenty-seven bodies of persons who had perished by violence at their own hands or those of others were landed by the drag-nets at Saint-Cloud. Then came the crash, with panic and utter ruin in its train ; Law flies the country, to die at Venice in poverty and disgrace, and Canillac, one of the Regent's *roués*, sums up the whole mad scheme in a sentence : "Why, it's all as old as the hills ; M. Law's discovery was nothing new,—long before his day I gave bills and didn't pay 'em . . . and that's the whole system in a nutshell !" The famous Banker's house stood in the *Rue Quincampoix* just where nowadays the omnibuses running along the *Rue de Rambuteau* cross the street at right angles.²

¹ Beranger, *La Gaudriole*, p. 13. "Œuvres complètes."

("It was the Regency then, and, without exaggeration, in the strangest, maddest way all France was frantic ; all the men were free and gay and all the women kind. . . .")

² The building was furnished with immensely massive iron bars, and three carved heads sculptured in relief within medallions adorned the string-course of the first floor. One of these heads was crowned with reeds and represented a river-god ; the second was a female head, the third a satyr's garlanded with vine-leaves and bunches of grapes. Law's Bank, founded

Several fine old mansions, now occupied by dealers in "medical specialities" and "fancy confectioneries," by cheese stores, infant schools, mirror-burnishers, soda-water manufacturers, flash jewellers, bear witness by occasional vestiges of artistic ornament to the sumptuous past of this now shabby street, the end houses of which frame a distant perspective of the graceful and venerable *Tour-Saint-Jacques*.¹ Nos. 58, 28, 14, 15 and above all No. 10 can still show some remains of wrought-iron work, dilapidated balconies, mutilated stone masks, pediments, carved bands of foliage, recesses still showing traces of rich sculpture, and elaborately worked balustrades. . . . But everything is falling to decay, perishing with time and weather, dropping into dust. Indeed a strong effort of the imagination is needed to revive the memory of all the wild, frantic hopes, all the unbridled extravagances, once witnessed by

originally (in a portion of the *Palais Mazarin* in the *Rue Vivienne*) with a capital of six million francs,—divided into 1,200 shares of 6,000 livres each, was privileged by Government to discount bills to bearer. Law,—a Scotchman and financier, born at Edinburgh, and then Controller General of the Finances in France,—established simultaneously a "Company of the West Indies" with the object of exploiting Louisiana and the Mississippi. . . . Following on a decree of 5th March, 1720, amalgamating the Bank and Company of the Indies, a crash (comparable to that of the *Union Générale* in 1882) was precipitated, and the shares fell from 9,000 livres to 600. Law was utterly discredited and fled to Brussels. The total face value of the paper issued was over three milliards (3,000 millions, £120,000,000), at a period when the figure of the Bank of France did not reach as much as 760 millions (£30,400,000).—Gustave Pessard, *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique de Paris*.

¹ The handsome Tour-Saint-Jacques, which now stands isolated in an enclosed garden at the corner of the Rue de Rivoli and the Boulevard de Strasbourg, was originally part of the old Church of Saint-Jacques de la Boucherie, destroyed at the Revolution, 1789. Pascal is said to have conducted experiments on the pressure of the atmosphere from its summit, and a statue of the Philosopher below the Tower commemorates the circumstance. [Transl.]

this sad, silent, thoroughfare, now filled by the acrid fusty odour of druggists' wares, and the heavy smell of fried



Tour Saint-Jacques

potatoes that is wafted from the goodwife's stall at the corner, where it is wedged into the angle of an ancient porch surmounted by the scutcheon of a noble house. . . .

THE RUE DE LA FERRONNERIE

THE MARCHÉ DES INNOCENTS—THE "CAVEAU"

IN the month of April, 1610, a vague and terrifying rumour ran through Paris, "The Slayer of the King is in the city!" Some could even describe him: "a strapping fellow, of a good tall figure, powerfully built with sturdy limbs; his hair was of a darkish red, and he was dressed in green." His name was Ravaillac.

On Friday, 14th May, the Duc de Vendôme came to see the King his father to warn him that an astrologer, La Brosse, had foretold that the day would prove fatal to him;¹ Henri pretended to make light of the matter, but he was so troubled by the prophecy that he could neither work nor sleep. At four o'clock the King ordered an open coach, because of the heat; he took his place, accompanied by the Duc d'Épernon, MM. de Montbazon and De la Force, the Maréchal de Laverdin, and M. de Créqui, and the coachman was told to drive to the Arsenal to enquire after the health of Sully, who was very ill. Paris was all quivering at the time with religious excitement; despite his gallantry, his adroitness and his happy good humour, despite his divorce from the Queen Margot and his marriage with Marie de Médicis, a niece of the

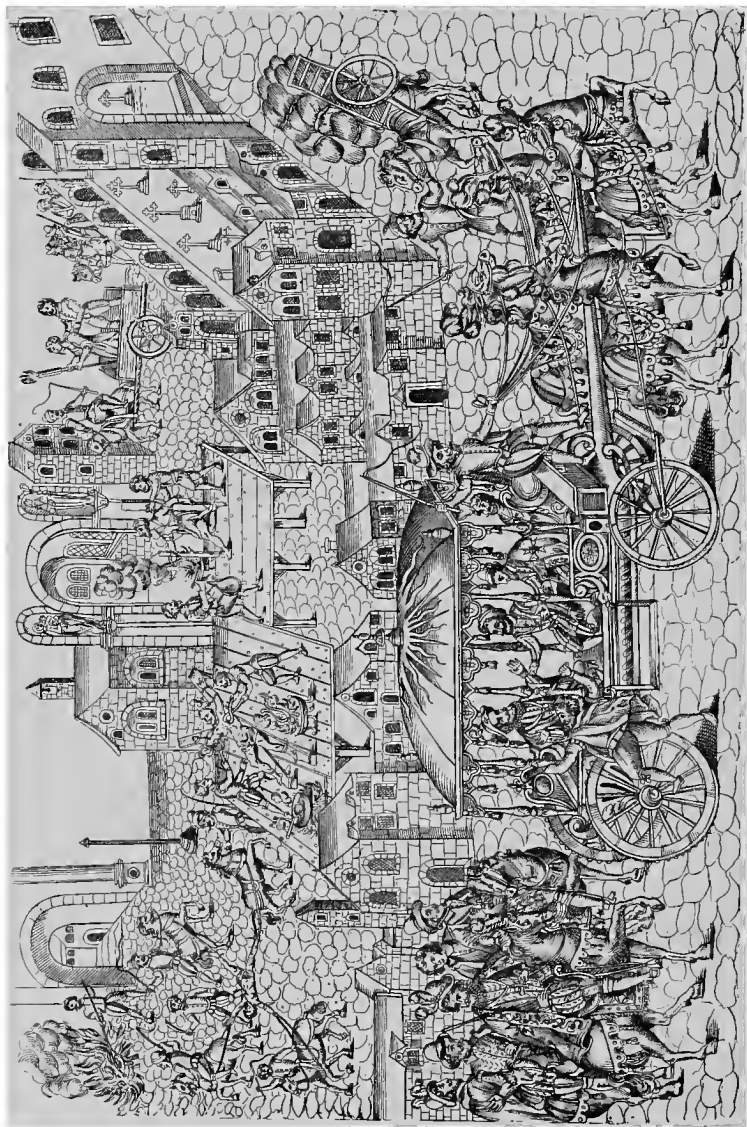
¹ "La Brosse," answered the King, "is a cunning old knave who wants to get hold of your money, and you are a young fool to believe him. Our days are counted before God" (*Les Causes Célèbres*. "Procès de Ravaillac.")

Pope's, "who brought him neither heart nor wit nor beauty, but the biggest dowry of the day," Henri IV. had not succeeded in disarming the hostility of the "*Catholiques à gros grains*," the ingrained Catholics,—as P. de l'Estoile calls the irreconcilable adherents of the Ligue,—and was still accounted an "enemy of the true Religion". The most firmly convinced fanatic of them all was "the slayer of the King"—a madman and a mystic, his bosom covered with amulets, a visionary haunted by dreams of blood.

For nearly three weeks Ravaillac kept prowling round the Louvre. He had found it difficult to procure a lodging in the city, which was crowded with strangers attracted to the fêtes in connexion with the coronation of Marie de Médicis. He had been refused accommodation, for want of room, at the *Cinq-Croissants*, an inn situated near the *Quinze-Vingts*—facing the *Comédie-Française* of the present day. As he was leaving the place, his eyes had been fixed in a sort of hypnotic trance on "a large, sharp-pointed knife, shaped like a bayonet and with a handle of stag's horn".¹ "Deeming it a fit instrument to kill the King with," he appropriated it,² and going on his way

¹ Letter from Malherbe to Peiresc.

² "From the table he took up a knife, not because of being refused admission, but as deeming the knife a fitting instrument to carry out his purpose, and kept it for a fortnight or three weeks in a bag in his pocket. Having abandoned his purpose, he took the road to return home, and got as far as Étampes. On the way there he broke off the point of the knife for about an inch against a cart in front of the garden at Chanteloup. But as he stood before the *Ecce Homo* in the outskirts of Étampes, his purpose came back to him to execute his design of killing the King. He did not resist the temptation as before and returned to Paris with this fixed resolution, because the King made no endeavour to convert those of the so-called Reformed religion, and it was said that he "intended to make war on the Pope and transfer the Holy See to Paris."—Examination of Ravaillac.



Assassination of Henri IV. and Execution of Ravallac (from a contemporary broadside)

plunged into the populous *faubourg* since replaced by the *Rue Saint-Honoré*, and finally found a lodging at the *Trois-Pigeons*, a humble hostelry standing right opposite the entrance doors of the Church of *Saint-Roch*.

From there he set out, on the morning of the 14th, his knife in his pocket, to return to his post of observation in front of the Louvre. He followed the coach as far as the *Rue de la Ferronnerie*. A block occurred in this narrow street, which was always crowded with traffic, and which ran along the boundary wall of the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents. The *valets de pied* took a short cut by the Charnel-house of the Cemetery, meaning to wait for the King at the corner of the *Rue Saint-Denis*. Meantime the coach, pressed by two carts, had to draw in against the shop of the "*Cœur couronné percé d'une flèche*" (crowned heart transfixcd by an arrow). Suddenly Ravaillac sprang upon a stone post by the roadside, and stretching his arm over the coach wheel, "landed two knife thrusts in the King's side". Henri IV. gave a stifled cry . . . and fell back dead. . . . The tragedy was enacted opposite the house—rebuilt since then—now numbered 8 in the street.¹ Ravaillac was quartered in the *Place de Grève* after being tortured with red-hot pincers, "as was only right". Moreover, a magistrate of an inventive turn, M. de Guesle, the King's *Procureur*, supplemented the pincers with such pleasing adjuncts as melted lead, boiling oil and pitch and a mixture of wax and sulphur. Finally the "sturdy scoundrel" was finished

¹ At the time the street was reconstructed, under Louis XIV., about 1669, "a Maltese cross, painted red," was traced on the house which replaced the "Crowned Heart". The mark, which could still be made out in 1880, has now disappeared under the official plaster and whitewash.

off by the lackeys with swords; the bleeding fragments of his body were shared among the spectators, and "the meat" was roasted at every street corner. From the windows of the Louvre, the Queen could see the Swiss Guard cooking a joint underneath her balcony! "There was no good mother's son," L'Estoile declares, "but was fain to have his bit."

The Cemetery, near which the crime was committed, was at that time the most important in Paris. On its site now stands the *Square des Innocents* and the block of houses extending as far as the *Rue de la Lingerie*.

This large space of ground was a sort of "Campo Santo," a privileged locality. Corrozet certifies that "the ground there has such putrefactive qualities that a human body is consumed away in nine days". For six centuries, more than half the population of Paris was buried there. For the rich, a monument was erected in the open air or inside the charnel-houses built against the walls of the Graveyard, on the inside. For the poor, the bodies were taken down a ladder into vaults excavated to a depth of fifteen or eighteen feet; these common graves held as many as 1500 corpses. Access was obtained to them by wells planked over; two or three of these were always open. The excellent La Fontaine was buried there on 14th April, 1695. It was not till 1780 that burials were discontinued, on account of the mephitic odour given off by all this poisoned soil, which was a growing danger to the public health. The gravedigger Poutrain, a celebrated tosspot, claimed 90,000 burials in less than thirty years! The Cemetery was emptied and the charnel-houses destroyed.

But by the eighteenth century the *Rue de la Ferronnerie* had lost all trace of tragic associations. No longer, as of old, would you meet in it the grim "Bellman of the



Archway connecting the *Rue de la Ferronnerie* with the *Place des Innocents*

Dead," in his flapping black felt and long black gown painted over with death's-heads and cross-bones. He dangled an enormous hand-bell and cried out in a sepulchral voice that echoed in the dark :—

Réveillez-vous, gens qui dormez !
Priez Dieu pour les trépassés !

Milliners, seamstresses, fancy dealers and fashion mongers of all sorts, had made it their chosen domicile. Mlle. Morphise, "a caprice of Louis XV.," was an apprentice there, and the future Mme. Dubarry, who then bore the unassuming name of Jeanne Vaubernier, carried home her customers' parcels for Mme. Labille. In the



The old *Bureau des Lingères*, Rue Courtalon (now demolished), former Entrance Gateway

Rue Courtalon, within a few yards of the *Innocents*, was situated the "*Bureau des Lingères*," the elegant doorway of which still survives, having been re-erected as a relic in the Square a few steps from the famous *Fontaine des Innocents*. This is adorned with Jean Goujon's delight-

ful bas-reliefs, once the decorative panels of a sort of loggia, or open gallery at the corner of the *Innocents* and the *Rue Saint-Denis*, nearly opposite the Restaurant Baratte of the present day. Originally there were only six of these panels. It was Pajou who executed those for the fourth face, when it was decided to make a Fountain out of the arcades of the loggia, which were taken down and removed stone by stone. This Fountain became, at the period of the Revolution, the centre of a very important market, protected from the weather by hundreds of red umbrellas ; it is still a charming monument, in spite of all the restorations and cleansings and scrapings it has had to undergo at the hands of the powers that be !

The *Charniers* (Charnel-houses) were transformed into shops, some even existing to the present moment. At No. 7 in the *Rue des Innocents* a stable used for housing handcarts shows the vaulting arches of an earlier day still intact.¹

Under Louis XV. the highly picturesque Corporation of Scriveners and Public Writers had their pitches alongside the row of pillars at this spot. Common folk were then profoundly ignorant ; menservants and maidservants and other members of the vast illiterate class resorted therefore to these ingenious scribes to do their correspondence for them. Prices varied according to the style employed. . . . "If it is in the grand style, the letter is charged 10, 12 or 20 *sols* ; the meaner style costs 5 or 6 *sols* only."

¹ Same thing a little farther down the street, at a wine-shop, exhibiting the sign : *À l'Escargot d'or* (The Golden Snail).

Making our way along the *Rue des Innocents*, strewn with cabbage leaves, littered with baskets, hampers, and packing-cases, fragrant with the smell of oranges and lemons, pleasantly tempering the pungent odour of the countless cheeses stored in the adjoining market-sheds, we light at No. 15 on a signboard that reads strangely. "*Au Caveau*" (The Cellar) is the inscription, and truly it is one of the most curious of the "thieves'-kens" that lurk in the darkness of nocturnal Paris. An enterprising wine-shop-keeper has conceived the idea of turning into drinking dens the row of cells once occupied by the Monks. At the further end of the narrow entrance-way, almost completely filled by an enormous tin counter, a staircase descends,—a staircase so extremely narrow and low you have to bend your back to get down at all. Once there, you find a succession of vaulted cellars, hardly over eight feet high and thirteen across. The walls, of bare stone, are scored over with thousands of inscriptions and drawings, curses, oaths and threats, the wretched outcasts who spend their night in these smoky dungeons, which are open from midnight to midday, making a point of recording their signatures and lucubrations on the dismal walls. You are shown, cut in the stone with a knife, the name of Pranzini, the notorious murderer.

All the same I strongly suspect the obliging customers of scribbling the walls "just to please the casual visitor, you know". We went there ourselves the other evening. In our honour the pianist, a broken-down old fellow with filmy eyes, set his cracked instrument jingling, while Henri Braillet, a popular singer bearing some resemblance both to Coquelin *ainé* and Frascuelo, extolled in succession the delights of love and the glory of M. Fallières,

whom he is pleased to call "my little Armand."¹ Then he finished up with a ballad in "*argot*," his strong voice ringing finely under the reverberating vaults of the old Monks of the Holy League, and the admiring audience joining lustily in the choruses.

The company was made up of pallid, nervous-looking young bloods, with a bearing at once insolent and suspicious. One of our party, A. Dusart, an Advocate of talent, had just secured for one of them an unexpected acquittal, and our friend's client was still brimming over with surprise and gratitude. Some ladies of attractive looks and easy virtue condescended to share the cigarette of sympathy with us . . . and a lively conversation began. We had an opportunity of hearing how severely M. le Président X. is criticised by these special customers of his. One of his colleagues on the other hand, it appears, is a "capital good sort," and it is felt an honour to be sentenced by him. As for the Councillor Z., everybody knows he has a vile temper, especially when he has been losing the night before at the gaming tables . . . "and I know all about him, *I* do; I was a club-waiter one time," a gentleman assures us, dressed in a tightly buttoned light overcoat with sham astrakhan trimming, but without visible linen.

Then, in a friendly way and without a trace of shyness, each of our companions of the moment tells us his story of poverty and idleness and vice. The talk is of gaol, "doing time," and they show us a choice selection of cut-throat knives that are ready, it seems, at a touch from their amiable owners to plunge between the ribs of the likely swell. They exhibit for our benefit the mysterious

¹ "*Viens ! mon petit Armand !*"—Respectfully dedicated to President Fallières. (Words by Will and Nola ; Music by A. Serge.)

art of using a revolver without so much as taking it out of the coat pocket where the "little barker" lies snug. Amazing some of their stories; but somehow the fellows give us the impression of wilfully exaggerating their bru-



Fontaine des Innocents

tality. One or two, it must be allowed, have handsome, fine-cut features, that speak rather of vice than callous ferocity. . . .

There is a sudden silence. . . . A tall, thin lad, with brown moustaches and bright eager eyes, a red plush

handkerchief tied round his throat, has just come in. It is the "Jockey," our neighbours tell us in an awed whisper, and the hush that greets his entrance proclaims the almost royal prestige attaching to the name. A girl with fair hair is with him. She too is a notorious personage; in a duel that made a sensation, in the *Rue de Bondy*, she got rid, we are credibly informed, of two rivals.

Yes, it is a strange company, sitting there drinking, smoking, singing loud and muttering low, and making ready to spend the night in these close, confined cellars, dimly lighted by a few flickering gas jets. "Halloa, the coppers!" cries a handsome girl suddenly, and a couple of Police Agents in uniform, carrying revolvers in their cases of shiny leather, enter to take a look round these strange quarters where the "*Apaches*," the Hooligans, the gaol-birds, of a great city are herded together; the other frequenters of the place are a few bedizened street-walkers, who come mincing in to visit their "pals,"—the devoted Manons of these unattractive Des Grieux! It is two o'clock in the morning by this time, and we take leave of the odd society we have been hobnobbing with.

Outside, the moon floods the *Place des Innocents* with silvery light. In the distance gleam hundreds of little moving lights. They are the lamps attached to the shafts of the market-carts converging from all directions on the *Halles*. The night is full of a dull, persistent rumble of traffic, only broken by the plaintive barking of a lost dog, and the echoes of the noisy choruses that still resound from the underground recesses of the "*Caveau*," where the incorrigible vagabonds and dangerous nightbirds who frequent its vaults await the dawn of another day of vicious idleness.

THE HALLES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE COUR DU HEAUME—THE RUE PIROUETTE—THE RUE
DE LA GRANDE-TRUANDERIE—THE ‘ANGE-GABRIEL’

THE little winding, dark, narrow lanes that abut on the *Halles Centrales* have always been reckoned among the most picturesque in Paris,—and with good reason; it is an old tradition, still largely true at the present day. Portions of streets still remain that give some vague idea of what they must once have been,—the *Rue Mondétour*, the *Rue Pirouette*, the *Rues de la Grande* and *de la Petite-Truanderie* for instance. There, as in the East, buying and selling was carried on, and bargains struck, on the doorsteps, the shop behind serving as a store-room; hence the judicious regulations of Étienne Boileau forbidding traders “to hail a customer before he has left the neighbour’s stall”.

Half the population of Paris swarmed in these confined alleys, crowded all day long with purchasers, porters, dealers, housewives, loafers, light o’ loves, cut-throats and scholars playing truant from the Sorbonne. Endless the discussions and confabulations; a learned Doctor of the Faculties ambling by on his mule would be hooted, hours and hours would be spent in gossip, a merry-andrew would collect a gaping circle round him, a pickpocket

would be caught in the act, a couple of women would fall to quarrelling. There, at the far end of the *Rue Pirouette*, just where the Rue de Rambuteau now crosses it, exactly opposite the quarter of the *Halles* devoted to the sale of fish, rose the pillory. "It was a little eight-sided tower, pierced with tall Gothic windows. There was but one storey above the ground-floor, in the midst of which was an iron wheel pierced with holes through which were thrust the head and hands of the criminals,—thieves, murderers, blasphemers, libertines, condemned to this ignominious exposure. They were fastened there for three market-days running, for two hours a day."¹ In order that everybody might duly enjoy the edifying sight every half hour the pillory was turned so as to face in a different direction; the victims were made to perform a *pirouette*,—whence the name of the street.

The Tower of the Pillory counted, as it quite deserved to do, among the sights of Paris. Originally it was also the scene of executions; men were broken on the wheel there, and hanged, and beheaded. Thus without moving a step and keeping half an eye all the while on their baskets of prunes, their casks of honey, their boxes of spices or their capons from La Bresse, the worthy shopkeepers of the district had been able to see the decapitation of Olivier III. de Clisson in 1344, and Jacques d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours on 4th August, 1477, to confine ourselves only to great and powerful noblemen.—After the end of the eighteenth century executions were discontinued at the spot; and justice confined her operations to exposing in the pillory bankrupts, sellers by false weight, thieves, and above all pro-

¹ E. Beaurepaire, *La Chronique des Rues*, p. 19.

couresses, who were driven there, "seated astraddle and face to the tail on an ass!" So delicate and facetious an amusement never failed to attract the crowd, and this nest of little streets was like an ant-hill. They were famous and the scene of much hard drinking. Assignations were frequently given at the "*Puits d'Amour*" (Well of Love), situated at the crossing of the *Grande* and *Petite Truanderie*. It owed its imposing name partly no doubt to the excellence of its water, but the morality,—or shall we say immorality,—of the "merry maidens" of the quarter who resorted thither to draw water, was not without its effect also, say the ill-natured chroniclers of the day.

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The *Cour du Heaume* still remains unaltered at No. 5 *Rue Pirouette*, and provides a striking picture of what these old houses once were. Traversing a low vaulted passageway, half blocked with baskets, empty hampers and ladders, the flags littered with withered fern-fronds and cabbage leaves, we reach a vast courtyard surrounded by open galleries with wooden pillars on the ground-floor, but closed in above with dusty glass. In the fourteenth century it was a sumptuous mansion; to-day it is nothing more than a space where street hawkers find stabling for hand-barrows, which point their shafts, polished by much handling, at fine old panelled ceilings. Another portion of the building is occupied by a fish-dealer, who will sell you any day as many splendid great lobsters, raw or boiled at choice, as ever you wish, to say nothing of fat Burgundy snails by the hundred bushel.

The ground is sticky with filth, sodden with trampled

snail-shells and lobster-shells. You slip on bits of stale fish or wisps of packing straw ; but what rich tones of colour, what depths of russet and orange, the old walls have to show, steeped as they have been for hundreds of years in the fumes of all the rich odorous victuals that have passed to and fro within their confined limits ! Housewives, fishwomen, innkeepers, well-to-do restaurateurs, with heavy gold watch-chains dangling across



Cour du Heaume

their stomachs, lounge in and out, buying and bargaining ; hampers crammed with trussed lobsters and countless dozens of snails, all ready dressed with butter and parsley, are carried by through the throng of cooks pressing round the long blue-painted table at the back where the goods are sold. It is quite one of the most amusing corners of this amusing quarter of the town.



Pointe Saint-Eustache, looking up the Rue Turbigo, in 1906

Carefully edging round perilous black holes that give access to divers cellars, we finally come out into the *Rue de la Grande Truanderie*. It is a street of many drinking shops supplying fragrant absinthes and many-coloured *apéritifs* to showily dressed dealers who have come to fix up some keenly contested bargain over the zinc counter. Close by in the roadway, round improvised stalls, are groups of tired-looking porters, kitchen-gardeners, market labourers, women with aprons tucked up and bare arms. Hurriedly, without sitting down and without exchanging a word, they gulp down a bowl of hot soup or a glass of white wine. The pavement disappears under the accumulations of vegetable refuse, and the air is full of the smell of celery. A brisk open-air trade is done in hot coffee and roast potatoes and roughly made sandwiches, while from behind doors comes a noble sputtering of sausages frying in the pan. Every one is in a hurry, eager to get their bargains settled and done with.

"Cabbage heads—how much apiece?"

"Fifteen sous."

"I'll give ten."

"Come, make it the dozen."

"No, ten, I say."

"All right, come on, clear out the hamper, old jade!"

Then the saleswoman empties her wares into sacks, humming over a waltz tune to herself. The bars are crammed, the doorways heaped high with baskets and bundles of vegetables. Outside a crowd is gathered round a photographer perched on a ladder, who "does groups,"—to-day it is the strawberry-girls' turn. It is a thrilling moment; in angular poses, with unwinking eyes, holding in their hands, as if offering up a sacrifice, pretty

baskets full of ripe, red strawberries, the victims gaze with respectful awe at the artist's uplifted finger telling them to "keep quite still now." Market porters, carrying hampers of the fruit, stand as stiff as so many tree-trunks. Not a soul dares so much as smile,—except one pretty, fair-haired girl, a pink carnation between her saucy lips, who will *not* stay quiet . . . she does not mean to be a strawberry girl all her life, you may be very sure! . . .

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In 1797 this populous quarter was the scene of a sensational arrest. On 10th May the capture was effected at eleven o'clock in the morning of the Citoyen Gracchus Babeuf, who had been in hiding "in the *Rue de la Truanderie*, at No. 21, the house at the corner of the *Rue Verderet*, next to a small café the front of which is painted red, at a tailor's by name Tissot".

The Police of the Directory had long been on the look out for Babeuf, accused of conspiracy against the security of the State. Convinced of the crying need of reform in an ill-regulated condition of things, an ardent advocate of the terrorist doctrines, straightforward but hot-headed, Babeuf had gathered round him a group of feather-brained revolutionaries and was firmly bent on some day delivering a blow at the Government. His retreat was well chosen amid this labyrinth of lanes and alleys affording a score of different avenues of escape. But a certain Grigel having denounced the plot and betrayed the secret of Babeuf's hiding-place, the Directory had ordered Dossonville,—Inspector-General of Police,—to lay hands on the terrible conspirator, while the Citoyen President Carnot had been at the pains to

trace with his own hand in red chalk the plan of the locality where the arrest was to take place.

After surmounting a thousand obstacles, Dossonville finally secured an entrance to the modest lodging, where Babeuf, in company with Buonarroti, an old ally of Robespierre, and Pellé, his secretary, was inditing the final manifestos to "put the conspiracy in trim." Suddenly laid by the heels, Babeuf exclaimed:—

"It is all over, tyranny is too much for us!" and watched the Police with scornful eyes as they searched the premises. Dossonville declares in his official report that he seized "proclamations headed, in letters as long and thick as a man's finger, the words,—‘Constitution of 93, or Death,’ orders to distribute powder to the assassins whose business it was to slaughter the Members of the Directory and the two Councils, to pillage all the shops," and so on and so on. The better to remove Babeuf and his accomplices without interference, Dossonville had artfully let it be supposed that he was dealing with ordinary law-breakers, and his report ends thus: "Everything went off without the smallest disturbance, and I noticed that the news we had put about was not without effect, for the neighbours all shouted,—‘Bravo! don't let the thieves and murderers escape!’ Babeuf was the only person who seemed surprised to find himself greeted with cries of ‘Thief, thief’."¹

¹ The learned M. Léonce Grasilier has published in the *Nouvelle Revue Rétrospective* (10th June, 1901), a very curious report drawn from the private papers of the then Inspector-General—Jean-Baptiste Dossonville, a retired coffee-house keeper who became one of the most active Police Agents. We owe our best thanks to M. L. Grasilier, who has kindly allowed us to use this precious and picturesque document.

"REPORT of the Inspector-General Dossonville, 21 Floréal, year IV. of the Republic, One and Indivisible.

Some months subsequently, in the course of the same

"I received directions on the 21st of the current month, to put into execution an order of arrest of the Executive Directory, bearing date the 19th, and authorising the arrest of Babeuf.

"The execution of these commands was of such paramount importance, and the Executive Directory itself regarded the matter as being so intimately connected with the primary interests of the Republic, that the Citoyen Carnot, its President, had drawn out and traced the plan of the locality where the insolent conspirator Babeuf was coolly calculating the overthrow of the Constitution, organising assassination and pillage, and meditating the ruin of his country.

"It was therefore in accordance with the plan of the place that concealed Babeuf from all eyes he desired to avoid, that I ranged my batteries so that he should not escape me.

"It was now nine o'clock in the morning.

"After carefully reconnoitring the house in question, situated in the *Rue de la Grande-Truanderie*, No. 21, at the corner of the *Rue Verderet*, I consulted with the Citoyen Jolly, Adjutant-General of the *Section du Mail*, and we agreed that, directly I should have made an entry into the house, he was so to dispose a picket of cavalry then at the *Pointe Eustache*, as to cut off all possibility of escape,—to wit at both ends of the *Rue Verderet* he was to place two troopers with orders to let no one pass. This precaution was to guard against the chance of Babeuf's lodgings having two exits. Meantime the main body of the picket was to blockade the main entrance door of the house, to prevent any one coming near or leaving the place.

"The district where these duties had to be carried out being near the *Halles*, and consequently thickly populated, and making sure the preparation it necessitated would attract a great crowd, I thought it wise to spread about a report to the effect that it was a gang of thieves and murderers to be arrested. I arranged this with the Citoyen Jolly, and then set off to find some constituted authority to accompany me.

"I visited the house of the Citoyen Baron, *Juge de Paix* of the Section; but he was from home. Thence I betook myself to *Rue Neuve-Eustache* to find the Citoyen Lefrançois, *Juge de Paix* of the *Section Brutus*, and asked him if he would go with me on a duty I was charged with by the Minister of General Police, in virtue of an order from the Directory. He told me roundly he would rather give in his resignation than have a hand in any such affair. On receiving this answer I proceeded to find the *Juge de Paix* of the *Section Contrat Social*; but he was sick.

"Time was slipping by, and I was getting more and more impatient. Finally I decided to go and find the *Juge de Paix* of the *Section Bon-*

year, 1797, Babeuf, whose escape Drouet—no other than *Conseil*, in the arrondissement of which the *Rue de la Grande-Truanderie* lies. But he was worse than any of them; on my proposing that he should accompany me to execute an order of the Directory, he asked me what the order was. I had the paper in my hand, but on reflexion, I asked him point-blank if he meant to come with me. He said no. Thereupon I put the order back in my pocket, and informed him I should be obliged to report his refusal. He answered I should do well to do so, and that I was at liberty to say he had altogether declined to accompany me.

“I was therefore obliged to withdraw and try elsewhere. I thought of the constituted authorities of the *Section de Bonne-Nouvelle*, the nearest to the *Section de Bon-Conseil*; but as the principles of the *Juge de Paix* of this Section are perfectly well-known to me, I thought it would be more judicious not to think of him.

“I could not tell where to apply to. The fear of missing my blow, the time that was slipping away, everything redoubled my impatience. Eventually the Citoyen Jolly, who thought as I did, suggested to me the Citoyen René, Commissary of Police of the *Section de Brutus*; he spoke of him as a very likely man to second me, but he did not know where he lived.

“I resolved therefore to return to the *Juge de Paix* of that Section to inquire the address of the Commissary of Police. Luckily enough I found him at the *Juge de Paix*'s house. I begged him to leave the room with me for a moment; then I asked him to accompany me in the execution of my duty, and I must do this public functionary the justice to say that he did not even give me time to say another word. He started off in my company with a zeal and devotion above all praise. It was then eleven o'clock.

“We set out therefore, the Commissary of Police, some other *citoyens* who were with me, and myself, for Babeuf's lair. The Citoyen Jolly returned to the cavalry picket, to post the men as we had arranged between us; but fearing the clatter of the horses' hoofs might put Babeuf on the alert, I thought it was wiser to occupy the room where Babeuf was hidden, and meantime the cavalry could advance and make its dispositions.

“Then we entered the house. I placed two of the *citoyens* who accompanied me half way up the stairs. The Commissary of Police, two other *citoyens* and myself, mounted to the third storey. I rang at the door of a set of rooms occupied by the Citoyen Tissot, who was the individual mentioned as giving shelter to Babeuf. The Citoyenne Tissot opened the door to us. The Commissary followed me in, as well as the two *citoyens*. I asked the Citoyenne Tissot if her husband was in. On her replying he was not, I made as if to go on into the kitchen; but

Postmaster Drouet of Varennes fame!—had vainly tried

I turned suddenly instead and slipped down a short passage which led me to a little room on the left, the door of which I opened so opportunely that I was close upon Babeuf and the men who were with him before they had, so to speak, so much as seen me.

“Babeuf was at his working table getting out his 44th Number. There were with him Buonarroti and Pellé, Héron’s secretary. I notified the order of which I was bearer, and instantly gave directions to the two *citoyens*, who during this short interval, had also arrived in the room, to watch the windows and guard against any attempt at escape the gentlemen might make.

“At this crisis the most abject consternation was depicted on the three men’s faces. They saw the game was up, so to speak, and although they had firearms loaded to the muzzle and swords all about them, and though in the first instance I had appeared quite alone, they did not make the smallest movement to defend themselves. Babeuf rose and stood in front of his table, Buonarroti was busy hiding under him a paper he gave up again a moment later, while Pellé pointed out to me that he was not included in the order. I told him he must argue it out with the Minister of General Police.

“Babeuf, as he got up from his chair, exclaimed: ‘It is all over, tyranny is too much for us!’

“Then, a moment later, he asked me why ‘I obeyed masters’. I told him I obeyed a Government for which the People had frankly and freely pronounced, and without wasting more time in useless talk, I went on with my duties.

“I collected such papers as appeared to me best fitted to confirm the truth of this vast and odious conspiracy. During the short space of time I could give to examining them, I noticed especially proclamations headed, in letters as long and thick as a man’s finger, with the words,—‘Constitution of 93, or Death,’ orders to distribute powder to the assassins and brigands whose business it was to slaughter the ‘Executive Directory and the two Councils,’ the ‘Staff of the *Garde Parisienne* and the Constituted Authorities,’ to pillage all the shops and stores, besides placards inscribed, ‘All who insult the sovereignty of the People merit Death!’ and a seal with the legend ‘Salut Public’. All these papers were enclosed in a box and conveyed along with the prisoners to the Ministry of General Police.

“For the rest of the boxes and papers, of which there are a great many still left in the room, seals have been affixed, to guard which I have set two men, chosen from among the cavalry men who aided me in carrying out my duties, this provisionally and until other orders are received.

to effect from the Prison of the *Temple*,¹ was executed at Vendôme. The house itself, No. 21 of the *Rue de la Truanderie*, has disappeared, demolished in the cutting of the new streets which have let a little light and air into these wretched alleys. It stood where the *Rue de Turbigo* now runs, a few yards from the Restaurant Pharamond,—the favourite rendezvous of cider drinkers and epicures in tripe and calves' head.

Directly night falls, this industrious quarter changes character completely, and the dregs of the population come pouring in. By day it is picturesque and pleasantly suggestive of bygone days, after dark it is dangerous and

"These arrangements completed, the prisoners were placed each in a hackney-coach and conveyed, under good and trusty escort of cavalry, to the Ministry of General Police.

"The Citoyen Jolly, above mentioned, carried out to perfection the business he was intrusted with, in connexion with the posting of the military contingent. The crowd was prodigious, but everything went off without the smallest disturbance, and I noticed that the news we had put about that they were common robbers and murderers had not been without its effect, for the neighbours all shouted,—'Bravo! don't let the thieves and murderers escape!'

"Babeuf was the only person who seemed surprised to find himself greeted with cries of 'Thief, thief!' Perhaps he would not have been so astonished if they had confined themselves to crying 'Murderer!'—for, by what he proposed, he meant to have made thirty thousand heads fall.

"DOSSONVILLE."

¹ Drouet was the postmaster at Varennes, who recognised Louis XVI. from his resemblance to his effigy on the coinage, when he and the Queen were on their flight to the frontier (June, 1791), and detained the party. This led to the discovery of the scheme, and the Royal family were conveyed back to Paris. See the graphic chapter on the subject in Carlyle's *French Revolution*; also Dumas' *La Route de Varennes*. [Transl.]

repulsive. Simultaneously with the lighting up of the clock-face of *Saint-Eustache*, a horde of loafers and night prowlers, tramps and "sturdy vagabonds," mingled with slatternly girls, their heads tied up in knotted handkerchiefs or wearing only their own thick, unkempt locks, black, red or flaxen, girls with swinging hips and impudent eyes, invades these little, dark lanes, where they seem to shirk away from the gas-lights. The low liquor-shops fill up, and the high jinks begin.

The older the night, the more uproarious is the scene; drinking, eating and singing are in full swing in a score of pothouses,—the "*Belle de Nuit*," the "*Chien qui fume*," the "*Caveau*" (described above), and plenty more. But it is at the *Ange-Gabriel*, in the *Rue Pirouette*, that the fun is most fast and furious; it is a notorious "ken," a sort of "Maxim's" of the "*Apaches*". Gaol-birds and their doxies come there to regale themselves on snail suppers and drain bumpers of mulled wine; the great saloon on the first floor is full of "queer customers,"—heroes of knifing and blackmail, fellows with shifty, predatory eyes and thin, cruel lips, and white-faced girls with painted mouths. All, men and women, are smoking cigarettes and talking in whispers, their remarks punctuated with knowing winks and quick sidelong glances. A poor devil of a violinist, with a depressed air about him, is scraping out waltz tunes, to which his audience pay scant attention, though they deign now and then to take up the choruses in a desultory way. The landlord declares there are quite honest people among his customers; well, it may be so, but they have the misfortune to rub shoulders at the *Ange-Gabriel* with very bad company,—that is all one can say.

Yet we have supped there in our time, *Detaille*,

Claretie, his son, and sundry other friends, amongst the number being Henri-Robert, the distinguished Advocate. His presence, which was noticed at once, produced indeed among the amiable frequenters of the place such a stirring of sympathy in our favour that we had all the difficulty in the world to escape accepting some highly compromis-



Rue Pirouette, in 1875

ing invitations. . . . Outside, meantime, in front of the *Halles*, under a lovely moonlit sky, the market-carts were coming in, in a slow but never-ceasing procession, and the pavements being heaped with great bunches of carnations, jasmines and roses, that seemed to purify with their exquisite scent the atmosphere of vice and crime we had just been breathing.

THE RUE DES BONS-ENFANTS

DESPITE its singularly engaging name, the *Rue des Bons-Enfants* is never very crowded. Running parallel with the *Rue de Valois*, where the Fine Arts are so much in evidence, it knows nothing of the pretty actresses, pride of the Conservatoire, whose smart, fascinating figures throng the offices of the worthy Dujardin-Beaumetz, grand-master of the National and State-aided Theatres. It is, with few exceptions, only noisy packers, busy clerks, Police Agents, parcel-boys and booksellers' assistants, who frequent the *Rue des Bons-Enfants*. Now and then the happy accident of a block of traffic will bring that way a carriage load of elegantly dressed ladies going to shop at the *Magasins du Louvre*, but it is a chance not to be counted on, however much desired, by the pensive quill-drivers who spoil paper behind the windows of this dull, cross-grained street.

The fact is, the *Rue des Bons-Enfants*, which previously to 1782 extended as far as the Palais-Royal,¹ is a victim

¹ The Palais-Royal has had a strangely chequered existence. Originally built by Cardinal Richelieu during the years 1619-1636, and occupied by him till his death, it was bequeathed by him to the Crown. It then became the residence of the Queen-Regent, Anne of Austria (widow of Louis XIII.) and her two sons, Louis XIV. and Philippe d'Orléans, and the name became gradually changed (against the Queen's wishes) from Palais-Cardinal to Palais-Royal. Richelieu's apartments were occupied by his successor Cardinal Mazarin, the Queen's Minister and, so said

of the Duke of Orleans' projects. When that Prince surrounded the great garden, where for so many years the Parisians had considered themselves at home, with buildings which he proposed to let to tenants, the scandal was prodigious. The Duke was the butt of a thousand jests and sarcasms and scurrilous songs :—

rumour, the Queen's lover. Readers of Dumas will remember the opening scene of *Twenty Years After*, where Mazarin sits solitary, harassed and unpopular, in Richelieu's chair, before Richelieu's writing-table, while the murmurs of the Parisian populace are heard without. Louis XIV. gave the Palace to his brother, the Duc d'Orléans, whose son, another Philippe d'Orléans (d. 1723) resided and ruled there as Regent, during the minority of Louis XV. There took place the famous suppers which gave rise to so much scandal, and which the Duc de Saint-Simon describes for us. Then at the Revolutionary period the notorious Philippe-Égalité, who after casting in his lot with the King's enemies, was guillotined in 1793, a greater profligate and as great a spendthrift as his grandfather the Regent, enclosed the gardens of the Palais-Royal, which had for years been a favourite resort of the Parisians, with buildings and colonnades, much as they exist to the present day, and let them out as shops, gaming-houses, theatres and cafés, as a means of raising revenue. The place soon became the centre of Parisian gaiety, and for years was the resort of all visitors to Paris in search of dissipation and amusement. Now it is becoming more and more deserted every day. It was in front of one of the cafés (the Café Foy), under the colonnade of the Palais-Royal, that Camille Desmoulins harangued the populace on 12th July, 1789, two days before the taking of the Bastille. On the restoration in 1815 the Orléans family recovered possession of the Palais-Royal, and it was occupied by Louis-Philippe down to the end of 1830, the year of his accession as "citizen-King". At the Revolution of 1848 the mob completely wrecked the Royal apartments. After being known as the Palais-Égalité and then again as the Palais-Royal, it became the Palais-National, only to resume once more its old name under Napoleon III., who assigned the South wing, facing the Louvre, as a residence for his uncle, Prince Jérôme Napoléon (d. 1860), once King of Westphalia. On 22nd May, 1871, the Communards set the Palais-Royal on fire, and a large part of the original building was destroyed.

We must distinguish the Palace proper, covering the Southern portion of the whole space, from the buildings erected by Égalité surrounding the gardens. The former is now occupied by the Conseil d'État, [Transl.]

Le Prince des Gagne-Deniers,
 Abattant des arbres antiques,
 Nous réserve sous ses portiques,
 À travers de petits sentiers,
 L'air épuré de ses boutiques
 Et l'ombrage de ses lauriers.¹

The works went on all the same, and after the Opéra, —then situated at the corner of the *Rue Saint-Honoré*, on the ground occupied by the present *Rue de Valois*,— had been finally burnt to the ground on 8th June, 1786, one evening when Gluck's *Orphée* was being played, a new street was constructed separating the *Palais-Royal* from the *Rue des Bons-Enfants*; kitchen smells replaced the balsamic odours of the flowery pastures originally laid out by Cardinal Richelieu. It was the signal for a rapid degradation; since that day the street has altered very little, and is one of the corners of Paris where the soul of the Past may most readily be evoked.

The old street indeed recalls many memories and contains many curious buildings. Passing up it towards the *Rue Saint-Honoré*, we first encounter, on our right, at No. 8, a broad vaulted passage,—the entrance of the *Cloître Saint-Honoré*, an old and noble Religious House pulled down in 1793, and now replaced by tall workmen's dwellings. A creamery brightens the right side of the passage-way; on the opposite side-walk a wine-dealer has set out—well in the draught—four tables covered with table cloths of a bright red check. Up above swing a raw leg of mutton and a brace of plucked fowls, and behind the

¹ "The Prince of Skinflints, felling the fine old trees, reserves for us beneath his colonnades, across little meagre paths, the refined air of his shops to breathe and the shade of his laurels to sit under!"

glass are rows of pigeon-holes filled with clean napkins, while a polished metal counter reflects a brilliant array of bottles. It is all very bright and cheerful and a trifle old-fashioned; everything smacks of the eighteenth century, and it would create little or no surprise to see some pretty cousin of Manon Lescaut walk in and take her place, in light skirts, her hair rolled in a topknot under a morning cap, to drink a glass of "*Suresnes*" with a gallant



Cloître Saint-Honoré

Sergeant of the Guard. This little passage is curiously lighted; the illumination comes from above, from a high semi-circular bay open to the sky, into which open the windows of the picturesque six-storeyed house.

Opposite, at No. 7, between a coal-dealer and a tavern, is a black, dingy archway leading to the *Passage Henri-IV.*, a dark and tortuous corridor.

Two fried-fish shops poison it with their smoke and smell, and a locksmith fills it with the din of hammering.

It appears that at an earlier date, about 1860, it was a pleasant spot to visit; an attractive perfumery business, presided over by attractive women, was established there, and drew a select clientèle. . . . How the world changes, to be sure!

Close by, at No. 9, a noble-looking and imposing gateway opens upon the *Cour des Fontaines*; surmounted by scutcheons and coats of arms, decorated by sculpture and carving, but now dusty and dirty, plastered with written advertisements, flanked by the withered remnants of mortuary wreaths, smeared with an aggressive bright-blue wash, it sums up in its profaned beauty the history of the *Rue des Bons-Enfants*, and many another Paris street, the erstwhile historic mansions of which are now divided up and turned to base uses, housing a score of humble industries and mean trades. Under the archway gléam, more bright and gay and fresh-looking than ever for the contrast with the old grey stonework, the pink and yellow and white of peonies, irises and marguerites; a little further on a poulterer is plucking chickens at her stall, which displays salads and celery on top of wooden cages from which flap the ears of unhappy rabbits. Below an inlet stone tablet surrounded by a carved scroll of oak-leaves, can still be read in half-obliterated lettering:—

Cabinet de lecture ;—Abonnement aux journaux du jour et de la veille.

("Reading-room ;—Subscriptions received for the day's papers, and also for yesterday's.")

Subscriptions for yesterday's papers! . . . Hardly up to date, is it? . . .

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At No. 19, a little further on, an imposing doorway is

seen, on the arched pediment of which is inscribed on a slab framed in scrolls of flowers,—“*Hôtel de la Chancellerie d'Orléans*”. Needless to say this inscription, so sug-



Rue des Bons-Enfants—Passage opening on the *Cour des Fontaines*

gestive of former grandeur, is surrounded by a dozen notices and advertisements of all colours and sizes, showing how low the once noble mansion has descended nowadays

in the social scale. We will enter the vaulted passage-way ; two statues stand in niches, one on either side, and below them are stone posts connected by iron chains, intended to afford visitors a protection against the coaches driving in and out. The oval courtyard is still picturesque and pleasing to the eye ; at the further side, raised a few steps above the pavement and relieved by pillars and porticos, stands a really beautiful building. The *concierge* pushes open the creaking door with some difficulty, and the visitor rubs his eyes in amazement.

Stepping out of the courtyard where busy housewives are beating carpets, drawing water, shaking up salads in baskets of iron wire, we find ourselves in a suite of rooms of fairylike beauty, gilded like some Saint's reliquary, rich with scrollwork and carving, with beautifully wrought pediments above the doors, and wonderful painted ceilings by Coypel ! But alas ! it all reeks of decay and damp and neglect. The lovely building which till lately housed the *Musée des Arts décoratifs* has for some time been standing vacant ; its only occupants are hordes of stray cats that scurry noisily through the deserted rooms.

As we wander through the sumptuous apartments, echoing with emptiness, we call up a wealth of memories . . . the Regency, Law, Cardinal Dubois, and almost as real, the characters created by the genial Dumas,—the Chevalier d'Harmental and the Père Buvat, the delightful, if hardly heroic, hero of the pretty, romantic story,¹ the scene of which is largely laid in the *Rue des Bons-Enfants*, the sloping roofs of which supply an airy pathway of escape

¹ *The Chevalier d'Harmental*, by Alexandre Dumas, with its continuation *The Regent's Daughter* (Methuen's "Complete Dumas," translated by Alfred Allinson). [Transl.]

to the Regent from the daggers of the Duchesse du Maine's conspirators! . . . He knew it well, this *Rue des Bons-Enfants*, did the "great Alexandre," the diverting storyteller, who has charmed so many generations! It was in fact in the *Bureaux* of the Duke of Orleans that in 1824, by the recommendation of General Foy, that he made his début as a supernumerary writer. The office was lost in admiration at his marvellous dexterity in cutting out envelopes and affixing the great seals of red wax bearing the Ducal arms; Oudard, the Head of his Department, introduced him to the good graces of the Duke of Orleans with the words: "I beg Monseigneur to grant the title of Clerk to this young man who writes a very fine hand, and even has some little intelligence!"

While still thus engaged in sealing His Royal Highness's letters, Dumas was completing his literary training and writing his first dramas,—*Christine à Fontainebleau* and *Henri III. et sa Cour*. The latter play indeed, being accepted at the *Théâtre-Français*, was very near costing its author his daily bread. Hearing that a humble clerk was daring to dabble in literature, the Duke cancelled with a stroke of the pen the presumptuous young fellow's extra pay,—and from that day forward the administrative bigwigs looked upon him with suspicion and dislike; he was an *Artist*, that bugbear of every official mind! He was soon reduced to choose between his post and his "stage-plays," and the unfortunate Dumas had to resign his 125 francs a month at the very time when his mother lay dying. The bureaucrats had won the day. *But* Dumas had his revenge, when (11th February, 1829), after the first night of *Henri III.*, which was received with universal applause at the "*Français*," the Duke of Orleans, standing and bareheaded,

heard the name of his former employé triumphantly acclaimed as the winner of an indubitable dramatic success.

The same evening, on reaching home, Dumas found a letter from his old Chief, couched in terms of extravagant panegyric, and concluding,—“ I feel sure your crowns of victory and the future of fame and fortune your genius



Alexandre Dumas (père)

opens before you still leave you sensible to the claims of friendship, and believe me my feeling for you is of the kindest”.

It was the same individual who had been chiefly instrumental in stopping his salary!

Here are a few of the sufficient reasons which should

induce every good Parisian to devote an afternoon's walk to the picturesque *Rue des Bons-Enfants*. I will add another; he may very likely pick up at the *Salle Silvestre*,—the smoky *Hôtel Drouot* (Old Curiosity Shop) of second-hand books, now installed at No. 28—some fine bargains in the way of old volumes bound in Levant leather. Then the house itself is worth seeing; Richelieu lived there once, and it was a poor teacher of Danish who having won it at one of the lotteries so much in vogue in the Revolution period, sold it to the bibliophile Silvestre. . . . In very deed we may say, every stone of Paris has a history!

BOULEVARD BONNE-NOUVELLE

THE RUE DE LA LUNE—THE RUE DE CLÉRY

ALMOST every day, alas! Paris mourns the disappearance of some relic of her wondrous history; so it is our bounden duty to keep jealous guard over what few material vestiges remain of the scenes where stirring episodes of our National drama have been enacted. Amongst the richest in associations must be reckoned the congeries of old narrow streets of tall gloomy houses which slope down steeply towards the *Porte Saint-Denis*, ending on the top of the high stone escarpment which dominates the South side of the *Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle*. The ground is now levelled; but it was far from being so formerly, and the hill formed quite a stiff climb.

It was indeed one of the most picturesque bits on the line of the boulevard. In 1671 the City of Paris had built at this point a superb, monumental Gate, which is still there for us to admire, to celebrate the victories of Louis XIV. in Germany. The Parisians were fond of coming here on Sundays with wife and children to stroll in the broad undulating avenues, planted with fine trees and bordered on either side by drinking booths and dancing saloons, market gardeners and florists. Here the youngsters could run about in safety, as the traffic, what there was of it, made a *détour* to avoid the hill, at the top of which were such fine places for playing

bowls under the low boundary walls of the *Cimetière Bonne-Nouvelle*, exactly where the *Théâtre du Gymnase* and the *Restaurant Marguery* now stand. It was only in 1832 that the *Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle* was widened and levelled.

This widening abolished the *Rue Basse*, which passed close by the *Porte Saint-Denis*, in front of the spot now occupied by a cinematograph show, and simultaneously swept away a wigmaker's shop the sign of which was one of the curiosities of Paris. It represented the long-haired but unfortunate Absalom hanging by his locks from the bough of a tree while the ruthless Joab transfixed him with his lance; underneath were inscribed the burlesque lines:—

Ici contemplez la douleur
D'Absalom pendu par la nuque!
Il eût évité ce malheur
S'il avait porté perruque.¹

On the opposite side of the Boulevard a score of mean trades are nowadays installed in the basements of the old eighteenth-century houses which terminate the *Rue Beau-regard* and the *Rue de la Lune*. In the latter of these, under the Second Empire, a dilettante discovered the famous singer Marie Sasse—destined at a future day to create the title rôle of *L'Africaine* at the Opéra,—singing in a low “sing-song,” the “*Café Moka*,” in company with the great virtuoso Darcier.

Tobacconists, bar-tenders, dealers in coral, ballad mongers, bakers of hot *brioques*, occupy the street, each fulfilling their own appointed tasks, dealing out their

¹“Here contemplate the calamity of Absalom suspended by the head. He would have avoided this accident if he had worn a wig.”

wares, turning piano organs, yelling idiotic refrains, pouring out beer . . . then the street pursues its winding course, getting duller and duller as it proceeds, between two lines of tall old houses, black, decrepit and filthy; yet some of them, with their barred windows and wrought-



Rue de Cléry and Rue Beauregard

iron scrollwork, have managed to preserve a look of antiquity through all their degradation. At the top of the steep street, between two ponderous stone pillars, is the stern-looking doorway of the Church of *Notre-Dame de Bonne-Nouvelle*. The *Rue de la Lune*, the *Rue Beauregard* and the *Rue de Cléry*, all converge downhill on the

Porte Saint-Denis, so closely wedged in together at last that you ask in amazement how anybody can possibly find room to live in the rooms which seem to come to a point at the salient angle on each storey.



Corner of the *Rue de Cléry* (Lepère)

Yet people do live there, and the landlord who serves out his half-pints at No. 97 in the *Rue de Cléry*,—a narrow

house projecting like a promontory between the two streets at the extremity of which it stands,—is justified in writing upon his sign the words, “*Au poète de 93*; wines and spirits, furnished apartments”;—for there indeed lived André Chénier, before he went and got himself arrested at his friends the Pastorets’ house. Once taken, his fate was sealed; Collot d’Herbois, Barrère and Billaud-Varenne were not the kind of people to spare the satirist who had so soundly whipped in his verse,

Ces bourreaux, barbouilleurs de lois!¹

Yes, André Chénier inhabited this mean-looking house, where each floor finds room for only two tiny rooms; he climbed this gloomy staircase, he leant out at this little window that frames so picturesquely the graceful and imposing outline of the *Porte Saint-Denis*, which catches the light at the end of the steep streets. . . . Side by side with the official tablet recording the fact of André Chénier’s residence, a poster shows us a café waiter, with a broad smile and a napkin under his arm; it is the advertisement of an employés’ registry,—utilitarianism and poetry rubbing shoulders!

Looked at from the right-hand corner of the *Porte Saint-Denis*,² these tall old houses, whose roofs and

¹“These butchers, botchers of laws.”

²The *Porte-Saint-Denis* was erected in 1672 to commemorate the victories of Louis XIV. in Holland and on the Rhine. It is eighty-one feet in height, and was designed by Blondel. It stands between the Rue Saint-Denis and the Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Denis, where this line of streets, one of the most ancient and still one of the most important in Paris, is intersected by the Great Boulevards.

The *Porte Saint-Martin* occupies a similar position, in relation to the Rue Saint-Martin and the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Martin, another old and important line of thoroughfare, though nowadays, as well as the Rue Saint-Denis line, relieved and partly superseded by the great Boulevard de

angles cut the sky so fantastically, present much the same aspect as on 21st January, 1793, when at daybreak the Parisians, too terrified to protest, were hurrying to the Boulevard to see the melancholy procession pass by that was conveying Louis XVI. from the Prison of the *Temple* to the *Place de la Révolution*, where the scaffold awaited him. By 387 votes the King had just been condemned to death, "*sans conditions ni sursis*,"—"without conditions or delay".

At the *Temple*, Louis XVI., after sleeping soundly all night, woke about five o'clock. He then dressed, putting on white stockings, grey breeches, a white flannel waistcoat and a brown coat. After hearing mass on his knees, "on the bare ground, without *Prie-Dieu* or cushion," he stood a long time by the stove, finding it hard to get warm. After giving his final directions to his servant Cléry, he left the Prison about eight o'clock by the orders of General Santerre,—“Sir, the hour is almost come, it is time to be starting”. A heavy fog lay over the city, and the air was cold. After turning twice to gaze in the direction of the gloomy tower where he was leaving his wife and sisters, “Louis the Last” got into a carriage painted green. On his left sat his Confessor, while two gendarmes occupied the front seat; the King’s face was calm, as he read in a Breviary the Psalms of the Dying.

The strictest orders had been issued by the Commune of Paris. Traffic was absolutely forbidden on the route

Strasbourg, driven between the two by Baron Haussmann, and together with the Boulevard Saint-Michel on the left bank forming the main artery of traffic from North to South. The Porte Saint-Martin was erected by the City of Paris in honour of Louis XIV., from designs by Pierre Ballet, in 1674, two years after the Porte Saint-Denis. [Transl.]

followed by the funeral procession, and no one whatever was permitted to break the lines of troops which, four deep, guarded the way the whole length of the Boulevards standing motionless, "in a leaden silence". The shops were half closed, and there was nobody at doors or windows. Where the more important streets joined the Boulevards, artillery men, "chosen from among the most patriotic," stood with threatening mien and lighted fuses beside their guns, which were loaded with grape; behind them were massed reserves from the camp beyond the city bounds.

As the coach advanced, a dull, confused murmur ran through the crowd, while in the distance could be heard the lugubrious rolling of the drums dulled by the moisture in the air; finally the escort appeared in terrible and ominous array through the mist. First came the *Marseillais*, then the National Gendarmerie on horseback, and finally two field batteries immediately preceding the carriage which rolled slowly forward, its closed windows tarnished with the fog and surrounded by a forest of pikes and bayonets. The cortège was moving steadily on when suddenly, opposite the *Porte Saint-Denis* facing the *Rue de Cléry*, as it was climbing the hill of the *Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle*, a momentary hesitation, a brief halt occurred; there was shouting and pushing, figures disappearing into the fog, then men writhing on the ground, sabred where they stood, pools of blood on the roadway,—the whole thing over and finished in less than five minutes.

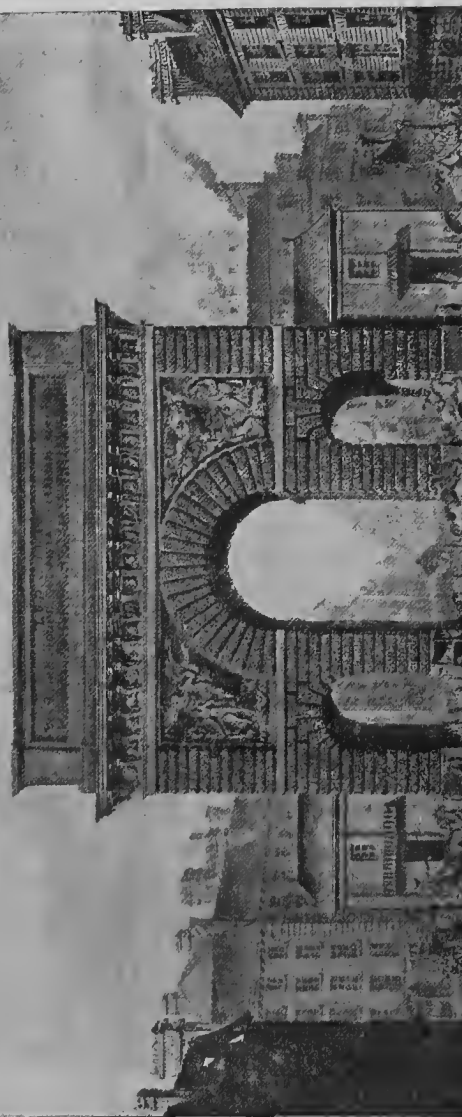
What was it that had happened? A few words will make this plain. On 20th January, the day immediately preceding that fixed for the King's execution, the *Comité de Salut public* had received warning from the *Comité de*

Sûreté générale couched in these terms: "*Citoyens*, the 'Committee of General Security' has just been informed by a known individual that certain evil-disposed persons propose, to-morrow, when Louis leaves the *Temple*, to assassinate him in order to spare him the shame of mounting the scaffold. The Committee does not put much credence in so unreasonable a project; nevertheless it deems itself called upon to give you warning, seeing that, under present circumstances, no precaution should be neglected."¹

The "known individual" who denounced the plot had fairly earned his money. There *was* a plot in serious earnest, and the man who was at the bottom of it was the most daring and skilful and determined of all the Royalist Conspirators; it was the Baron de Batz, whose almost incredible history has been written by a good friend of the author's, Lenotre. With an audacity that takes one's breath away, confronting a thousand dangers, defying cowards, traitors, police-agents, Committees and Sections, De Batz had arranged a supreme attempt, a forlorn hope, to save Louis XVI. on the very way to the scaffold, and with a sure eye he had singled out for the execution of his desperate scheme the precise spot of all others where the accidents of the ground would best second his plans.

Guns, horses, the carriage itself, were bound to labour heavily when climbing the sharp slope of the *Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle*, some slackening of pace and confusion would occur, and five hundred determined and well-armed men, hurling themselves *en masse* down the steep

¹ The original of this document is to be seen at the *Musée Carnavalet* in one of the cases in the *Galerie de la Révolution* (Case No. 61, Room XI.).



Porte Saint-Martin

acclivities of the *Rue de Cléry*, the *Rue de Beauregard* and the *Rue de la Lune*, would easily carry all obstacles before them, and breaking through the ranks of the National Guard, would save the King ! It was the supreme stroke, the last card. If promises were to be trusted, they had many tacit sympathisers. There would be a fight anyway, and the intrepid De Batz counted on victory. The fog itself was another factor in his favour.

Long before the hour fixed for assembling, the daring leader is at his post, at the corner of the *Rue de Cléry* and the *Rue de Beauregard*, anxious and alert, but surprised to see none of his confederates. He did not know one important fact,—that the “known individual” had not only denounced the plot, but had likewise handed in a list of the conspirators, and that at the earliest streak of dawn two gendarmes had presented themselves at each man’s dwelling and there remained on guard, precluding all exit. De Batz counted on five hundred accomplices, he found only twenty-five,—the few who had not slept at home that night. Others again had failed to reach the place of rendezvous, the streets being barred and approaches watched.

Nine o’clock strikes. The cortège is passing in front of the *Porte Saint-Denis*. Already the foremost files of the Cavalry and the guns have topped the hill ; in another instant the coach will be under the steep bank bordering the roadway on the left. It is the time and place chosen. A ringing shout strikes terror to all hearts,—“Here, all who would save the King !” It is De Batz who raised the cry, waving his hat in one hand and holding his sword in the other. Two brave men are with him, Devaux his secretary, La Guiche his friend ; four other conspirators

succeed in breaking through the lines of the National Guard, only to be cut down by the horsemen of the escort, De Batz alone disappearing as if by enchantment. . . . The few remaining confederates, who failed to penetrate into the roadway at all, are chased by the reserves along the little uphill winding streets into which they scurry for refuge. Some are bayoneted against the doors of the Church of *Notre-Dame* in the *Rue de la Lune*, where they had tried to find sanctuary.

While the prisoners were being removed, and the frightened crowd was still gazing open-mouthed at the rapid and murderous affray, the cortège went on its fatal way. Already the tail of the procession, half lost in the mist, was entering between the tall trees of the *Boulevard Poissonnière*. Slowly but surely, in the cold and wet, the sound died away of the sodden drums beating dismally in front of the green coach in which the unhappy Monarch was still reading the Psalms of the Dying on his way to the scaffold.

THE OLD BOULEVARD DU TEMPLE

AND THE PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE

“D^O I remember the old *Boulevard du Temple*? Why, of course I do . . . and with what feelings of pleasurable regret! I lived there five years,—from 1856 to 1861, when I won my ‘*prix de Rome*.’ . . . Ah! what dreams, what beautiful boyish dreams, I have enjoyed there, to be sure!”

Massenet, the beloved and admired master, who tells us with an emotion that communicates itself to his audience of his youth, so poor and hardworking, and so merry into the bargain. With keen and fascinated attention we listen as the great composer recalls with wit and geniality these early days of which he keeps so fond a memory.

“I was fifteen; I was a pupil at the *Conservatoire*, and in the evening, to make the needful bread and butter, played the kettle-drums in the orchestra at the *Théâtre-Lyrique*,—the peristyle of which occupied the spot where the entrance of the *Métropolitain* now is in the *Place de la République*. My pay amounted to the modest sum of just 45 francs a month! . . . and yet, I am bound to say, I played remarkably well,—so much so that Berlioz actually condescended once to compliment me, adding,—‘And what is more, you play true, which is a very uncommon thing’. Now to be ‘handy with the sticks’ and

to 'play true' are the two ambitions of every kettle-drummer ; so here was my first success assured ! I lived in the *Rue Ménilmontant*, No. 5, in a tiny room high up under the slates in a queer house almost exclusively occupied by the acrobats and other employés of the *Cirque*,—clowns, équestriennes, tight-rope dancers, pretty contortionists and tumblers, who kept their little homes tidy and watched the pot boil, while they rehearsed their professional 'turns,' juggling, throwing somersaults, wriggling through impossibly small hoops. . . . On Sunday mornings all would start out in the highest spirits to breakfast *al fresco*, in the country,—and when you had spent 30 sous, what extravagance you thought it ! . . . How young we were, to be sure ! . . .

"After spending the day at the *Conservatoire*, I used to repair at half-past five to the *Rue Basse-du-Temple*, a lane running parallel with the Boulevard, but at a lower level ; on to it opened the stage-doors, for actors and employés of every sort. The play began in those days at six o'clock. What a crowd and a crush and a confusion it was ! just think, all the supers and scene-shifters and dressers and chorus girls of the ten theatres which were then massed in this same *Boulevard du Temple*, jammed together in the little narrow, muddy alley, reeking with wine-shops and half blocked with stalls where they sold hot sausages and apple-puffs ! How filthy and 'grubby' it all was, and what a stench of garlick ! . . . But then how amusing and picturesque and alive ! . . .

"Once ensconced in my place in the orchestra, I used to work at my music during the dialogues,—there was plenty of 'spoken' in the Comic Operas of those days. I had drawn music staves on the stretched parchment of my

instruments, and so worked out my 'fugue' exercises on them, making my kettle-drums serve me as a blackboard. It was all clear profit, I did not waste my time, and I saved several sheets of music-paper at three sous the five sheets! . . . During the intervals we used to gather in what had once been the stables of the *Théâtre-Historique*, built by

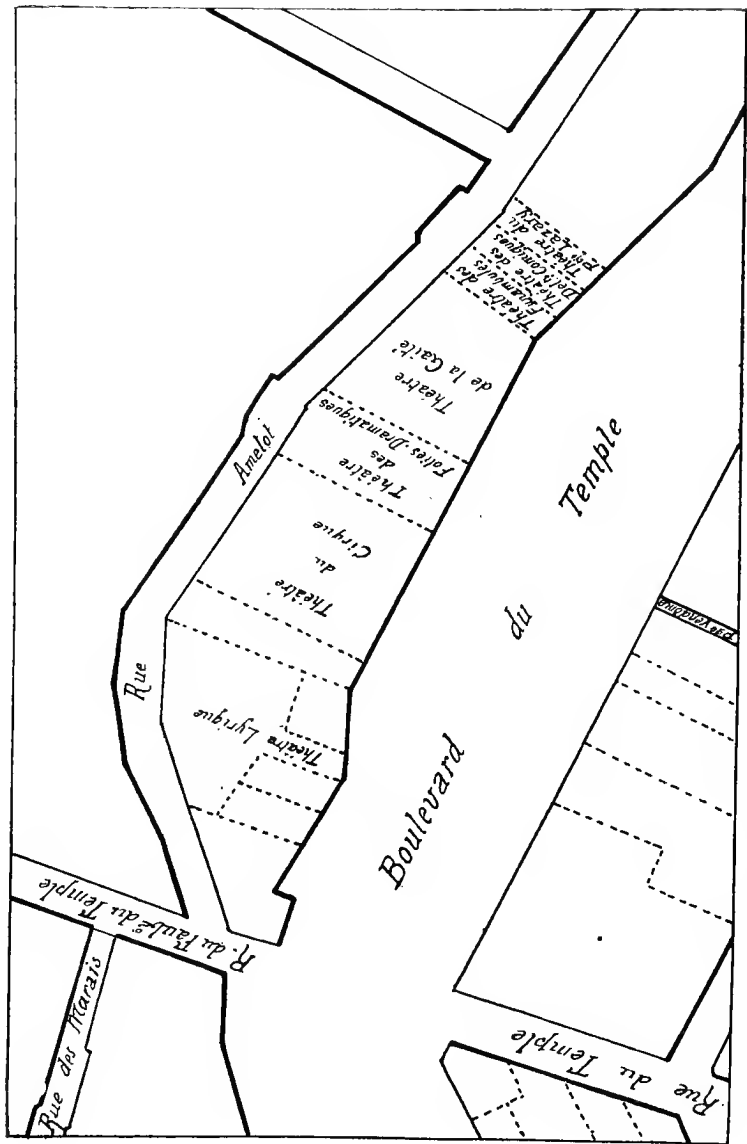


Massenet, in 1864

the great Dumas to lodge the steeds of d'Artagnan and Bussy d'Amboise! M. Réty, the Manager, had made it into a greenroom for us, a poor bare place dimly lighted by a couple of guttering candle-ends. . . .

"What exciting artistic battles have been fought out on this Stage where everything favoured novelty and bold-

ness and enterprise! . . . It was there *La Statue* was produced in 1858, a masterly work of the great Reyer whom I admire so sincerely . . . and the first representation of *Faust*, on 19th March, 1859! Gounod, the incomparable Gounod, had won all our hearts, we believed in his rising genius; Mme. Miolan-Carvalho was sublime, a great artist indeed!—We used to rehearse almost by stealth, under the direction of the excellent Léo Delibes, at that time Chorus master . . . everyone knew there was an organised hostile cabal—the new music, remember, was so utterly different from that of the successful composers of the day! . . . All connected with the representation were in a state of intense nervous anxiety, the piece seemed too long for one thing, . . . and Gounod shed tears . . . yes, real tears . . . at the ‘cuts’ he was forced to make in his score. When the ‘first night’ came, *Faust* was applauded certainly, but not so enthusiastically as we had expected or as the beautiful music deserved. The whole of the first Act was well received, and the Chorus of Old Men and the Famous Waltz were both encored; as for the Garden Scene, people could make nothing of it. . . . Yet Mme. Carvalho, Barbot and Balanqué, who played Mephisto, had been perfect in it. Léon Carvalho had arranged an exquisite *mise en scène*; for the first time on the stage the moon was made to rise over a garden scented with real flowers. But no, the audience remained cold. . . . In the following Acts, the Soldiers’ Chorus and the concluding Trio were encored. . . . For twelve or thirteen nights the struggle continued obstinately between the detractors, who hissed on every possible opportunity, and the enthusiastic admirers of the new piece. The Commissary of Police of the District attended every performance,



Boulevard du Temple—From Plan included in "Théâtres du Boulevard du Crime," by Henri Beaulieu

by order, ready to intervene, at any moment, should the two factions come to blows. It was two years afterwards, when Carvalho ventured on a revival, that the triumph of the masterpiece was assured beyond the possibility of doubt or discussion! . . .

“Then how many other memories cling about it! . . . *Orphée* above all, and Mme. Viardot, who played the part of Eurydice so admirably. This was in 1859; but to this day I can hear the wonderful voice mounting and descending the chromatic scale in the great final *aria* of the First Act. . . . It is all long ago now; but as unforgettable as ever! . . .”

Yes, Massenet is right; all who ever knew this fascinating *Boulevard du Temple* have retained an ineffaceable memory of the place. Our fathers and grandfathers could not speak of it without a show of feeling, and the picture representing its general aspect which hangs in one of the rooms of the *Musée Carnavalet* is a special favourite with the Parisian public and seldom fails to draw an interested crowd about it.

This famous Boulevard was opened in 1670, by order of Louis XIV.; it continued “the line of thoroughfare which, traversing the enclosure and marsh of the *Temple*, began at the *Porte Saint-Antoine* to terminate at the *Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire*”. Very soon this fine, tree-shaded avenue became the fashion, and all the world hastened to make the “tour of the Ramparts”. It was an attractive corner of the town, brimming over with life and stir and gaiety; such was the press of carriages filled with the *élégantes* of Paris that about four in the afternoon the traffic could only move at a foot’s-pace between the *Boulevard des Filles-du-Calvaire* and the Bastille. Indeed

the prisoners in that fortress, such of them as enjoyed the "freedom of the terraces," never failed to mount to the top of the towers and walls at this hour, provided with



Street Musicians under the Directory

spyglasses, to watch their fair friends disporting themselves below and wave a greeting to them from afar. . . . No fête is complete in Paris without its side-shows ; conjurers and mountebanks soon had their stands there, and

the ballad-singer trilled out to the jingle of her hurdy-gurdy the prettiest couplets of the Abbé de Lattaignant, Collé or Panard. Nicolet, in 1760, set up a booth, where all Paris came to gape at the famous ape that mimicked so comically the tricks and mannerisms of the actor Molé. . . . Le Grimacier, another celebrity of the Boulevard, made a fortune and sold the goodwill of his trestles and boards to a comrade, with the delightful stipulation, however, that *he* "was always to remain *Grimacier* in chief, without trespass on his prerogative". . . . Mlle. Malaga, a pretty rope-dancer who drew all eyes with her red tights and gold spangles, was another recognised institution. Curtius established a branch exhibition there, a dependancy of his famous Wax-Works Show; and it was thence, on 12th July, 1789, one fine sunny Sunday, that the people carried off the busts of Necker and the Duc d'Orléans to parade them in triumph, sheltered under a black veil, through the streets of Paris. . . . The rest of the story is familiar,—how the procession was stopped in the *Place Vendôme* by a detachment of the *Royal-Allemand* regiment, and how the Sieur Pepin, a haberdasher's shop-assistant, the proud bearer of *the image* of Necker, was shot in the leg and sabred in the body, and fell bleeding beside the broken bust!

The Revolution, which bursts all fetters, is greeted with enthusiasm on the *Boulevard du Temple*, where ten Theatres stood grouped together,—the *Gaieté*, the *Ambigu*, the *Délassements-Comiques*, the *Variétés-Amusantes*,—merely to mention two or three. . . . The Empire dragoons them, and Charles X. "censures" them; but it was only the sun of July (Revolution of 1830) that inaugurated the full triumph of the "*Boulevard du Crime*".

Such was the picturesque nickname the Parisians invented for this "home of the drama," where every evening from six to eleven so many crimes were perpetrated,—so many virtuous maidens wronged, children kidnapped by villains, and the like; in fact virtue never triumphed till, at the earliest, a quarter past eleven! Every evening this cheerful thoroughfare was thronged by theatre-goers long before the doors opened,—between five and six. Patiently the public waited in "*queue*," confined between long wooden barriers, munching apple-puffs and Bologna sausages with garlick, quaffing tumblers of liquorice-water or sucking oranges, the peel of which the "gods" carefully collected and put by in their pockets against the time when they could pitch it at the bald heads in the stalls.

A lookout was kept for the arrival of the more popular actors and actresses,—such as Frédérick Lemaître, Saint-Ernest, Bouffé, Mélingue, Bocage, Deburau, Paulin-Ménier, Colbrun, Mmes. Derval, Léontine, Déjazet, Clarisse Miroy and even Ameline, the giantess, who played without any fear of possible rivalry, drum-major at the *Cirque*, and used to promenade the street carrying in her arms her little friend Carolina-la-Laponne, the professional dwarf. So passionately enthusiastic was the public that, on 20th February, 1847, the date of the first performance of Dumas' *La Reine Margot*, at the *Théâtre-Historique*, the "*queue*" was formed twenty-four hours before the box-offices were open, and the play, which began at six, did not finish till three o'clock next morning!

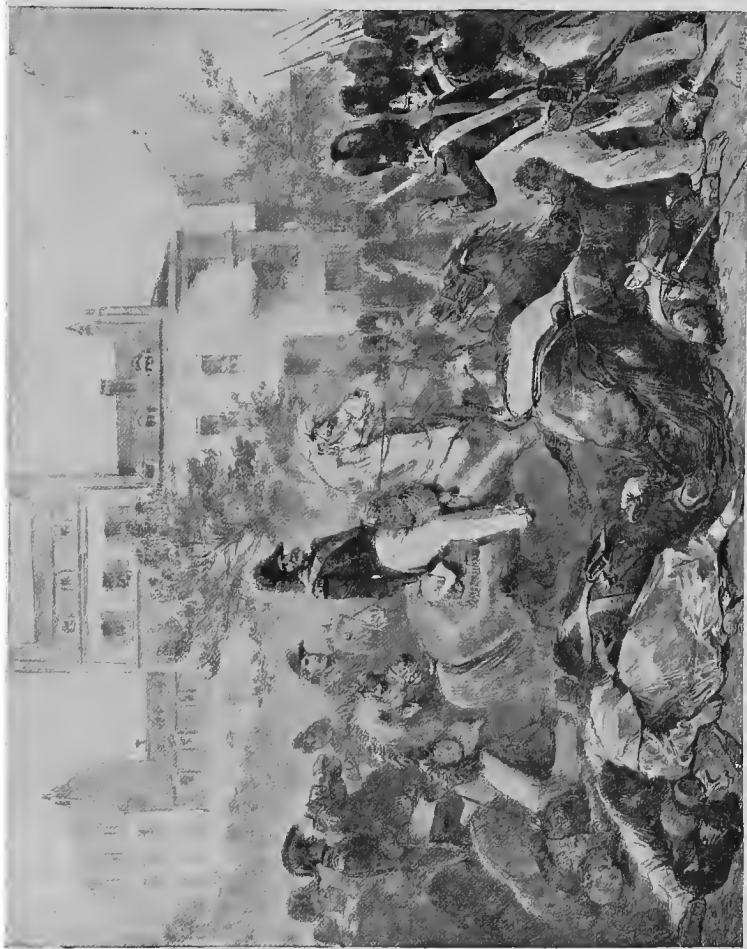
Simultaneously with this revival of dramatic art by the Romantic School, the Napoleonic legend was enjoying a new lease of life. The *Courrier des Théâtres* of 20th October, 1830, contains the following amazing list

of announcements :—Vaudeville,—*Bonaparte, lieutenant d'artillerie* ; Variétés,—*Napoléon à Berlin ou la Redingote grise* ; Nouveautés,—*L'Écolier de Brienne ou le Petit Caporal* (Mlle. Déjazet) ; Ambigu,—*Napoléon* ; Cirque-Olympique,—*Le Passage du Mont Saint-Bernard* (Military spectacle in 7 tableaux).

There were three or four actors,—Gobert, Cazot, Prudent, who played Napoleon in these and the like pieces, and the worthy fellows had ended by taking themselves seriously. Bent brows, cocked hat, Olympian look, all was copied to the life ; and they loved to show themselves on the Boulevard in the legendary poses of the great Emperor,—twirling a Cæsarean lock between nervous fingers, hands clasped behind the back, or gravely taking snuff out of the leather-lined pocket of a white kerseymere waistcoat !

Under the Second Empire the same happy state of things continued, at least for the first ten years, in the *Boulevard du Temple*,—the scene by-the-bye of Fieschi's hideous and bloody attempt on the life of Louis-Philippe on 28th July, 1835 ; more and more Theatres were opened, till they formed an almost unbroken series all the way from the *Faubourg du Temple* as far as the *Rue d'Angoulême*, following a line which, after crossing diagonally over the site of the present *Hôtel Moderne*, the *Place du Château-d'Eau* and the first half-dozen houses in the *Boulevard Voltaire* would terminate at what is now No. 48 in the existing *Boulevard du Temple*. These were,—the *Théâtre-Lyrique*, the *Cirque-Impérial*, the *Folies-Dramatiques*, the *Gaieté* (on the site of the right-hand corner house of the *Boulevard Voltaire*,—the spot where, in May, 1871, the Communards raised the barricade at which

Delescluze was killed), the *Funambules*, the *Délassements-Comiques*, the *Petit-Lazari*, then a little further on the



Fieschi's Bomb, 28th July, 1835

Cirque d'Hiver, and almost directly opposite, the *Théâtre-Déjazet*. Each of these Houses had its own public and

its own speciality. Yet once and again an unfortunate attempt was tried to revive the Classical drama, and some such dialogue as this might be overheard,—“Is it true they played Molière yesterday at the *Gaieté*?”—“Yes,—the *Misanthrope*.”—“And who was the Misanthrope?”—“Why, the Treasurer to be sure!”

In 1862 the inexorable fiat of Baron Haussmann put an end to the “*Boulevard du Crime*!” It was a sad blow for Paris, which loved the fascinating spot where, from generation to generation, rich and poor alike had laughed and cried so heartily! Protests and petitions were made by the score, but all in vain,—the ruthless *Préfet* stuck to his guns, and on the night of 15th July, 1862, when the clocks struck twelve, they rang the doom of all these Theatres, the demolition of which was to begin next morning.

Not a vestige remains to-day, save the old name and the old happy memories. Poor *Boulevard du Temple*!

THE BOURSE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE RUE VIVIENNE—THE SECTION LE PELETIER—THE
THÉÂTRE FEYDEAU—THE VAUDEVILLE—THE BOURSE

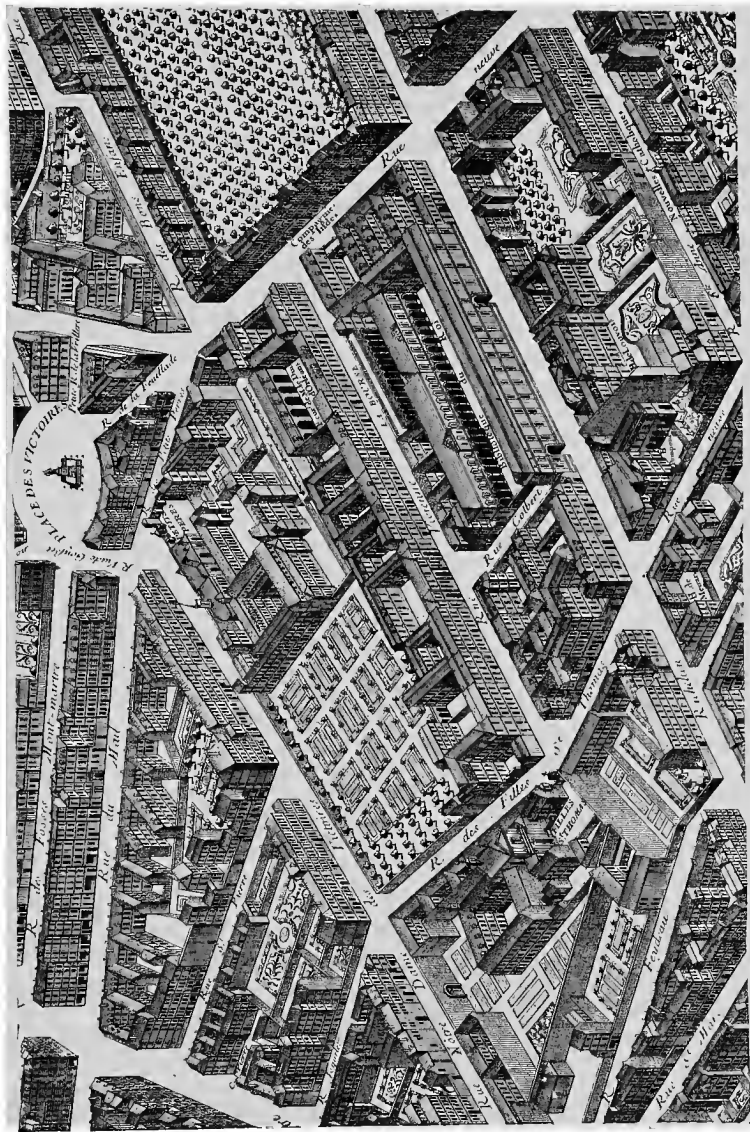
ON 14th October, 1795 (12 Vendémiaire, Year IV.), about ten at night, the inhabitants of the *Rue Vivienne* were roused out of their beauty sleep by confused sounds of shouting and tumult, by the rumble of cannon over the stones, the trampling of horses and the tramp-tramp of regiments marching. . . . Rushing to their windows, they discovered to their amazement that the street was in possession of the military; grenadiers, hussars, artillerymen filled the roadway, while alongside the houses Orderly Officers were galloping in frantic haste. Such was the state of things all along the street,—from the steps of the Palais-Royal to the other extremity of the *Rue Vivienne*, where it ended at the entrance porch of the ex-Convent of the *Filles-Saint-Thomas*, the ancient buildings and extensive gardens of which covered the whole area now occupied by the *Place de la Bourse*.

It was this Convent, closed since the beginning of the Revolution and now become the "*Section le Peletier*," that was being surrounded by a contingent of the garrison of Paris, under the orders of General Menou, supported by three Commissioners, Members of the Convention.

In 1795 Paris was a prey to the most atrocious scarcity.

Every night endless "*queues*" stood in plaintive patience at the doors of the bakers' and butchers' shops. It was only by presenting a ticket,—and these were very sparingly given,—that the unhappy citizen finally obtained very insufficient rations of bread and meat. Unscrupulous speculators and monopolists were keeping all the necessities of life at famine prices, and through their delinquencies the Convention was accused of trying to "starve the people," while "*assignats*" were so disastrously depreciated that, on 14th October, 1795, the *louis d'or* was worth 1,255 livres . . . in paper! The *Sections* were in revolt, and the Convention, finding itself the object of threats and insults, had resolved to take energetic measures of self-defence, to strike a decisive blow,—in fact to invest and disarm and close the *Section le Peletier*, the nucleus of the rising.

This *Section* had the reputation, not undeservedly, of favouring reactionary and Royalist tendencies. The battalion of the *Filles-Saint-Thomas* had been the only one to join the Swiss Guards in defending the Tuileries on the fatal 10th August, 1792. Throughout the Revolution, "moderatism" had been rampant there, and since Thermidor the *Section le Peletier* had rallied together all the "privileged plotters," all the "alarmists," all the "*muscadins*" with their love-locks and all the "*incroyables*" with their black coat-collars. Richer-Sérizy, the Baron de Batz, the Comte de Castellane, General Danican, and the emissaries of the exiled Princes were busily fanning the flames of Civil War under its shelter. That was why more than 20,000 armed men had been massed in the district, one regiment almost treading on the heels of another. But now talk took the place of action, discussion of decision ;



The Bourse, *Rue Vivienne*.—From Plan of Paris, known as Turgot's of 1739. The *Quartier Vivienne* and the *Place*

already the troops were fraternising and drinking with the citizens, while before the doors Generals and plumed *Conventionnels* were exchanging abuse and threats and arguments with angry members of the *Section*. One of the latter, the young De Lallot, fell to haranguing the troops in highflown phrases,—“Tremble, soldiers, at the violence you would commit if you invaded these precincts. . . . Is the *Section le Peletier* a hostile fortress? . . . Are we Austrians and enemies? . . . In the name of the Law I call upon you to withdraw. . . .” Finally the onlookers at this extraordinary scene beheld with utter amazement General Menou yield to the insurgents’ representations and give the word to beat a retreat.

Among others who looked on with indignation at this capitulation of the troops in the face of insurrection, was a young man, with a pale face, burning eyes and long hair straggling over the shoulders, badly dressed in a threadbare greatcoat, and wearing a hat too big for him. This was General Napoléon Bonaparte, at that time “without employment, pay or rations,” whose name had been erased three weeks before from the roster of General Officers on active service. Cashiered by Aubry as a “terrorist,” he was vegetating in Paris, poor, almost unknown and in so desperate a mood that only the day before he had told Barras,—“No matter at what sacrifice, I *must* find employment. If I cannot get anything to do, I shall go and ask service as a gunner at Constantinople.”¹

After spending his evening in a box at the *Théâtre Feydeau*, the circular façade of which, adorned with carya-

¹ *Mémoires de Barras*, vol. i., p. 244.

tides, was at No. 25 Rue Feydeau,—on the site of the present *Rue de la Bourse*,—and listening to a tearful piece called *Le Bon Fils* by the *citoyen* Hennequin, music by the *citoyen* Lebrun (attached to the theatre), he was making his way back by the *Passage* (known subsequently as the *Rue des Colonnnes*, and still existing almost intact) and *Rue des Filles-Saint-Thomas* to the shabby hotel where he was living. “*À l’Enseigne de la Liberté*” in the *Rue des Fossés-Montmartre* (now the *Rue d’Aboukir*), near the *Place des Victoires*. From the corner of the *Rue Vivienne*¹ he witnessed General Menou’s shameful retreat and saw the troops pocket their insult and march away “bayonet in sheath”. Bonaparte was furious, and followed the soldiers on their way back to the Convention. He hurried into the galleries of the Assembly Hall “to judge the effect of the news and note developments and

¹ Occupying the whole space enclosed by the Rue Vivienne, the Rue Richelieu, the Rue des Petits Champs and the Rue Colbert, is the famous Bibliothèque Nationale, the largest and richest Library in the world. The vast building stands on the site of the Palace of Cardinal Mazarin (d. 1661), but hardly a vestige of the original building remains. The Library, —down to the Revolution the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, and under Napoleon I. and III. the Bibliothèque Impériale,—may be said to date back to Saint-Louis (d. 1270), who established a library at the Sainte-Chapelle, to which Charles V. (“Le Sage”) largely added, as on a still larger scale did Louis XI., who established the collection at the Château de Blois. François I. (d. 1517) removed the Library to Fontainebleau, and decreed that a copy of every book printed in France must be deposited in the Royal Library. A little later the books were removed to Paris, but it was not till 1774, under Louis XV., that the Library found its final home in the Palais Mazarin. It embraces four departments: 1. Printed books and maps; 2. MSS.; 3. Engravings and prints; 4. Medals and Antiques. The number of volumes exceeds 3,000,000. This very greatly outnumbers the Library of the British Museum; but the accommodation for readers, and all arrangements for the finding and issuing of books are superior at the latter. [Transl.]



De Lallot haranguing the Troops 12 Vendémiaire, An IV

see what colour the matter would take".¹ . . . The rest of the story is familiar to all. The Convention, half wild with chagrin, cashiered the incompetent Menou and appeals to Barras, who suggests, to replace the superseded General, "Bonaparte, a little Corsican Officer, who will not make so many scruples about things". The next day, 13 Vendémiaire, the rebels were swept into annihilation on the Quai Voltaire and the steps of Saint-Roch, and the star of Bonaparte, promoted two days later to be General of Division, rose radiant on the horizon. The "little Corsican Officer" had been well inspired on the 12 Vendémiaire when he visited the *Théâtre Feydeau* to hear the rather feeble play of "The Good Son"!

The *Théâtre Feydeau* had begun brilliantly; founded in 1789 under the auspices of Monsieur, the King's brother, subsequently Louis XVIII., it soon developed into a dangerous rival of the *Théâtre Favart*, and the two rival stages entered on an artistic duel, the most evident result of which was to involve both in ruin. Thereupon they agreed to make peace, and ended their differences by an amalgamation, which saved them. On 16th September, 1801, the two united companies gave a performance in formal inauguration of the *Théâtre Feydeau*, which had been repaired and redecorated for the occasion, renamed "*Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique*," and endowed by the

¹ *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, vol. i., p. 311.

"When we saw Menou fail us at the pinch, and the Committee of Public Safety without a notion what to do next, I said: 'There is nothing easier than to supersede Menou; I have the very man we want,—a little Corsican Officer, who will not make so many scruples about things'. The Committee accepted my proposal, and at once consented to put Bonaparte on active service."—*Mémoires de Barras*, vol. i., p. 250.

Government with a subvention of 50,000 francs,—had Bonaparte perhaps borne in mind his providential evening at the play on 12 Vendémiaire?

For years the *Opéra-Comique* was the delight of Paris; but eventually it fell on evil days again. The House, which was falling into ruin, was finally closed in 1828, and rebuilt on a different site, facing the Place, opposite the Bourse, just raised by Brongniart on the vast area formerly occupied by the gardens and Convent of the *Filles-Saint-Thomas*; in other words, the new *Opéra-Comique* opened its doors on the exact spot where the *Rue du 4-Septembre* now begins. Not till 1840 did it return to the *Rue Favart*; and it was the *Vaudeville*,—the old building in the *Rue de Chartres* having lately been burnt down,—which took possession of the empty House, and down to 1869 was one of the glories and delights of Paris. Under the Second Empire indeed the *Vaudeville* enjoyed the distinction of welcoming the first manifestations of modern dramatic literature. Alexandre Dumas fils, opened the ball with the *Dame aux Camélias*, and before long Émile Augier, Octave Feuillet, Th. Barrière, Alph. Karr, L. Thiboust, Labiche kept its stage supplied with a long succession of plays from their violent, daring, witty, incisive and sarcastic répertoire; Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy produced on the same famous boards, 24th November, 1862, *Les Brebis de Panurge* and *La Clé de Métella*, thereby inaugurating a series of little masterpieces which have now definitely won their niche in the temple of Fame. Finally, it was there that Victorien Sardou triumphed with *Les Femmes Fortes*, *Nos Intimes* and *La Famille Benoitton*. Such was the popularity of the last-named play that the Manager of the *Vaudeville* put this unusual notice in the

papers: "In view of the great numbers of foreigners applying at the box-office, an Interpreter will be in attendance



Bonaparte, 12 Vendémiaire, An IV

from to-morrow speaking several languages". More than that, to put the crown on its vogue, not only did every fancy-shop in Paris display in the window the photographs of the exponents of this pleasing comedy, but even a pork-

butcher of Belleville moulded in lard two figures representing Félix and Frédéric Febvre, two of the leading actors at the Theatre!

The formation of the new *Rue du 4-Septembre* (which up to that date—4th September, 1870—was known as the *Rue du 10-Décembre*, in memory of the plébiscite) abolished this *Vaudeville* of happy fortunes. The last performance, in the *Place de la Bourse*, 11th April, 1869, was of the *Dame aux Camélias*; on the 23rd of the same month the new House was opened in the *Boulevard des Capucines*. Then came the war, the Siege of Paris, the Commune, and a noteworthy watercolour sketch of Pils shows us the Artillery bivouacking, in June, 1871, in the same *Place* where Menou's men had made such a deplorable spectacle of themselves in 1795. . . .

A peculiarly picturesque corner of this noisy and crowded Square is the old *Restaurant Champeaux*, the cellars of which once formed part of the Convent of the *Filles-Saint-Thomas*. Déjeuner there is a new experience. At the hour when the Bourse begins its clamorous dealings in stocks and shares, the restaurant fills with busy and hungry customers who gulp down the fare provided as if eating for a wager against time. Young men dash in like a whirlwind, hat on head and pencil in hand, and clap down a little white card beside the dishes on the table; this is the quotation of prices as they stand at the moment. Thus the customer is able, stock and share list in one hand and wine-list in the other, to order in the same breath 300 *Chemin de Fer du Nord* and a half bottle of Saint-Estèphe. The first runner is hardly gone before his place is taken by another, to be rapidly succeeded by a third. There are knitted brows and shakings of the head and dubious

mutterings,—“D’you really think so? . . . Is it official, eh? . . . Very well, then, I stick to my little lot!” . . . Then, still in a tearing hurry, still pencilling figures and still hat on head, these Mercuries of Fortune whirl off again, with rapid, mysterious nods. . . . How many indigestions



Artillery encamped in the *Place de la Bourse*

must be got in this restaurant (an excellent one in itself), so closely in touch with the agitations of the Exchange over the way! As they peel a pear, or pick a partridge on toast, these gentlemen of the Bourse may perhaps be in the act of making a fortune,—or losing one! Yes, it is a strange thing to think of, and certainly impresses the

imagination. . . . But alas! another and a much less seemly fancy *will* intrude. As I look out at the windows and see the Bourse opposite, somehow I seem to see silhouetted



The Bourse

against the white pillars of its colonnade, the predatory features of Robert Macaire and Bertrand, as they are shown in a savage cartoon of Daumier's adorning a "projected peristyle" for this the High Temple of Stock-jobbery!

THE COLONNE VENDÔME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

AT certain hours familiar enough to a host of men of all ages to whom the sight of a pretty face is far from being unattractive, the *Rue de la Paix* and the *Place Vendôme* prove beyond a doubt the most fascinating of Parisian resorts. But it would be a mistake to set down the *Colonne Vendôme* as the sole, or indeed main, object of their habit of lingering about the spot.

The fact is that several times a day this home of luxury, this Promised Land of elegance, where lovely frocks are fashioned of fabrics shot with gold and silver, mantles are embroidered with fabulous richness, and hats are trimmed till they glitter like jewels and wave with plumes like a gallant of the Court of Louis XIV., is enlivened by a bright-hued crowd of pretty girls, almost without exception good-looking and graceful. They are the models and saleswomen and errand-runners of the fashionable *modistes* and great milliners' shops of world-wide fame, bearing such names as Reboux, Virot, Doucet, Paquin and the like. They are the cleverest of workwomen, whose fairylike fingers are unrivalled in the arts of manipulating silk and lawn, satin and gauze, so as to make the fascinating wearers more fascinating still. Yes, here we have the quintessence of all that is most *chic* in the world of dress passing before our eyes. . . .

A killing glance, a smile, a compliment, and the merry-hearted toilers hurry back to the workroom blushing like so many roses.

At evening closing-time there are always some who find a "friend" waiting in the shadow of a doorway, only betrayed by the gleam of his cigarette. Then the pair, arm in arm, slip rapidly away in the discreet dusk . . . and I am told there are actually superficial minds in existence who think this better fun than Mathematics!

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From the very first this imposing, majestically proportioned *Place* has been destined for the noblest uses. Raised on the site of the hôtel and gardens of the Duc de Vendôme, son of Henri IV. and "la Belle Gabrielle," the "*Place Louis-le-Grand*" was begun by Louvois. His plans were on the grandest scale, and the statue of the "*Roi-Soleil*" was to occupy the centre of a vast area. On Louvois' death, however, Louis XIV., scared at the immense outlay, ordered the works to be stopped. Subsequently the King resold the land to the City of Paris, which in turn parcelled it out to individual proprietors, on condition of conforming to one general plan. Thereupon the great financiers hastened to erect a series of sumptuous mansions for their accommodation.

Those now forming the Ministry of Justice (Nos. 11 and 13) were built by two millionaire farmers of the revenue, Bourvalais and Villemarecq. The Regent suspecting the rectitude of their administration,—and not without good reason,—brought them both to book; the two hôtels were seized as securities and remained the property of the Crown; finally, in 1717, Dangeau announced

that they had been made the residence of the Grand Chancellors of France.

About the same date, Law, Controller-General of Finance, inhabited the house now numbered 21, and a provisional Bourse was established under the shadow of the statue of Louis XIV. ; for, while modifying Louvois' plans, the "*Grand Monarque*" had deigned to keep intact the equestrian figure of himself, the work of the sculptor Girardon. Tumblers and mountebanks came next ; the merry-andrews of the *Foire Saint-Ovide* set up their booths in 1762 in the *Place Louis-le-Grand*. Thither the Sieurs Gandon and Nicolet drew Court and town ; thither the fashionable world flocked to applaud *Arlequin racoleur*, and quaff "all kinds of Burgundy wines at the *Caffé Royal*". Driving races were held there, and sumptuous processions passed that way ; in fact it was one of the chosen haunts of Parisian high life.

The Revolution broke out, and on 10th August, 1792, the Assembly having decreed the demolition of all the statues of Kings, "immense crowds" poured into the Public Squares and found a fierce joy in hurling to the ground these "odious emblems of feudality".¹ The ponderous equestrian figure of Louis XIV. was not easily shifted ; capstans having been tried and failed, ropes were passed round the statue and hundreds of willing hands hauled on them. One woman was especially conspicuous for her furious energy. At last the bronze colossus gives way,

¹ "Already the tocsin had sounded, and all was stir and movement. A numerous group of people was busy levelling the statue of Louis XIV. ; several persons had been massacred in the *Place*, and the infamous Mlle. Théroigne, in riding-habit and on horseback, was exciting the people to fresh murders."—De Vaublanc, *Mémoires sur la Révolution française*, vol. ii., p. 220.

and falls on the virago who had displayed such frantic ardour, crushing her to death. She was called Rose Violet, and was one of the hawkers of Marat's *Ami du Peuple*; her death was a loss to that distinguished citizen!

On 13th August following, at dusk, as he left the *Couvent des Feuillants* (Monastery of the "Feuillantines," or Monks of St. Bernard), where he had fled for refuge after the taking of the Tuileries, Louis XVI. must have seen the remains of the monument still strewing the ground, the coach in which the Royal Family was packed having been directed, by order of the Sovereign People, to make a halt in the *Place des Piques*, as the *Place Louis-le-Grand* was now called, on its way to the *Temple* Prison. Two buildings of a stern and severe aspect then faced any one coming from the *Place*, on the farther side of the *Rue Saint-Honoré*; these were the *Couvent des Capucines* (Monastery of the Capuchin Friars,—Franciscans)—now the *Hôtel Continental*,—and the *Couvent des Feuillants*,—on the site of the present *Rue de Castiglione*, the tall and imposing Entrance Gateway of which rose in the median line of the *Place*. A narrow, crooked and dirty lane, called the *Passage des Feuillants*, winding between the two Religious Houses, was in 1792 the only thoroughfare connecting the *Place* with the Tuileries. It was continued, towards the Gardens, by a sort of vaulted corridor, on the left side of which was one of the entrances to the *Salle du Manège*, or Riding-School, which since November, 1789, had housed one after the other the Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Assembly and finally the Convention.

The Hall where the sittings were held covered the space now occupied by the *Rue de Rivoli*,—from the Entrance Gate of the Gardens as far as No. 228 or thereabouts.

When Louis XVI. was conveyed from the *Temple* to the Convention, the Monarch, "unhealthily fat and wear-



Statue of Louis XIV. (Girardon)

ing a three days' beard," must have passed through the *Passage des Feuillants*, always choked with filth and so

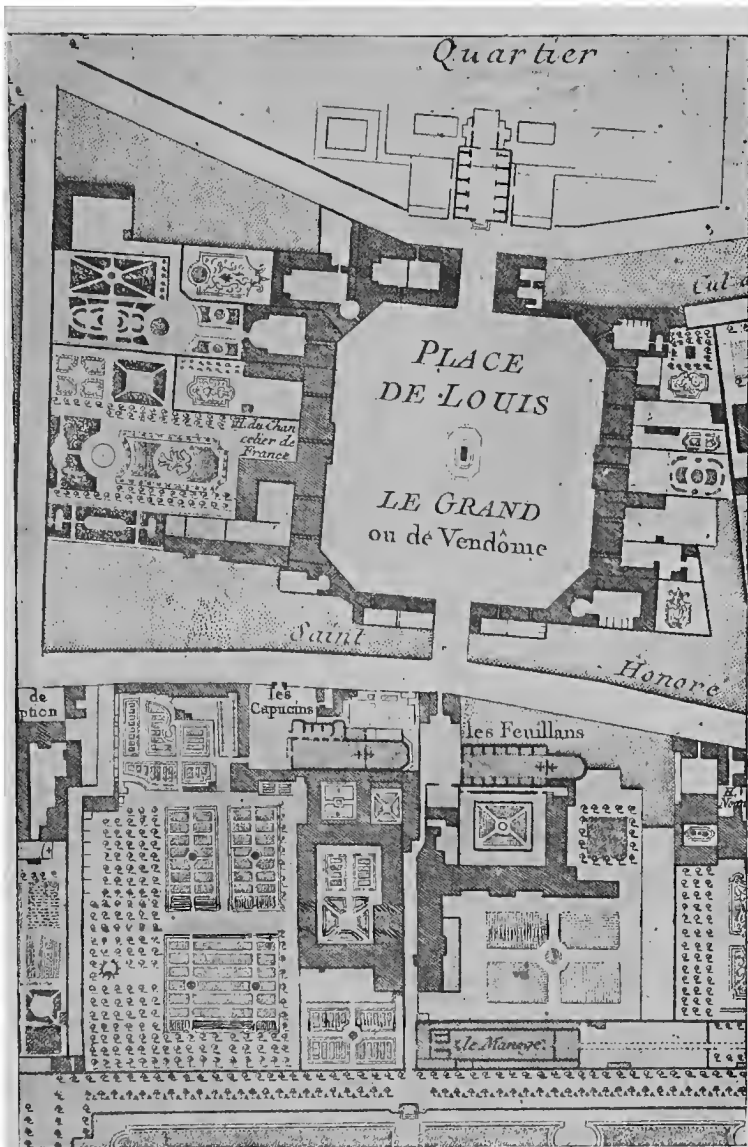
dark that the street lamps had to be kept burning in broad day.

After the 10th of August, 1792, Danton, Minister of Justice, and Camille Desmoulins had installed themselves at the Ministry, while Robespierre, who was living close by, at No. 398 *Rue Saint-Honoré*, at the cabinet-maker Duplay's, was lording it at the *Section*, where the *ci-devant* Marquis de Sade was Secretary and possessed no small influence.

Again it was in the *Place des Piques* (Revolutionary title of the erstwhile *Place Louis-le-Grand*), on the pedestal of white marble which once bore the statue of Louis XIV., that for two days the body of Le Peletier-Saint-Fargeau lay in state. He had been assassinated on 20th January, 1793,—the day before the execution of the King,—by the ex-Bodyguard Paris in the lower room at the Restaurant Février in the *ci-devant* Palais-Royal.

In 1806 Napoleon I. ordered the construction of a great street to connect the *Place* with the Boulevards;—"I mean it to be the finest in Paris". The huge area covered by the gardens of the suppressed *Couvent des Capucines* was cleared of the temporary structures that obstructed it,—a Panorama, a travelling theatre, and the *Cirque Franconi*, and lofty houses took their place. The new thoroughfare was baptised the *Rue Napoléon*, and it was only in 1814 that it finally got the name of the *Rue de la Paix*. At the same date (1806, 1807) the *Rue de Castiglione* was constructed on the site of the "*Feuillants*" and the old *Manège*.

In the *Place Vendôme* the Emperor raised, "to the glory of the *Grande Armée*," a column surmounted by his



Place Vendôme—From Plan of the Quartier du Palais-Royal, by Jalliot, 1774

statue, cast from the bronze of more than 1200 cannons captured from the Russians and Austrians. The great officers of State took possession of the princely hôtels of the old régime surrounding the Square.

Amongst others, the Commandant of Paris installed himself at No. 22 (ex-*Hôtel de Nocé*) ; and it was there that on 23rd October, 1812, General Malet, that most daring of conspirators, arrived at earliest dawn to inform General Hulin that he was superseded,—and under arrest.

“ Show me your orders ! ” demanded the Commandant in utter amazement.

“ Here they are ! ” Malet retorted, smashing his jaw with a pistol ball.

At the noise of the shot, Mme. Hulin, the General’s wife, awakened by this untimely and unusual disturbance, rushed out to her husband’s succour,

. . . dans le simple appareil
D’une beauté qu’on vient d’arracher au sommeil.¹

Accordingly, three days later, the newspapers, with their usual lack of respect, did not miss the opportunity of insinuating that, if the General had shown weakness, at any rate “ *Mme. la Générale* had shown herself in a good light ! ”

Leaving Hulin weltering in his blood, Malet crossed the *Place* and betook himself to No. 7, the Headquarters of the General Staff. There he was exposed and arrested by Colonel Doucet, before he had even reached the top of the stairs, in fact on the landing of the mezzanine floor ; it was from the balcony overlooking the Square, that he was shown presently, bound and gagged, to the astounded

¹ “ In the simple array of a beauty just roused from slumber.”

troops under the windows. . . . The beautiful building where this happened, which was the residence of the Governors of Paris, is now occupied by a fashionable *Modiste's* establishment, and our pretty Parisiennes flock there to try on their new "tailor-made" costumes in the salons where grave Staff Officers once met in deliberation, while a florist of a most artistic turn, offers us bouquets of roses and armfuls of peonies at the same corner of the Square at which for years, astraddle on cane-bottomed chairs,—like the "canaries" in *Carmen*,—the Orderlies used to sit waiting for orders and watching "the world go by". . . . The *Place* teems with other memories too! It was at No. 18, in a house that is now fragrant with the scents of a *parfumerie*, that for over thirty years the club of the *Union Artistique* (now known by the still more enticing title of the *Épatant*) enchanted all Paris with its entertainments and exhibitions.

It was at No. 12 that Chopin died, on 17th October, 1849. After removing hurriedly to the *Place Vendôme*, he felt he was dying. On Sunday the 15th October the illustrious Musician, after a fierce bout of pain, sees at the foot of his bed the Comtesse Delphine Potocka, "tall and slender and dressed in black". In scarcely audible tones he begged her to sing . . . they thought at first he was delirious, but he became more and more urgent. A piano was moved into the room, and the beautiful Comtesse, her eyes streaming with tears, sang with all her soul in her voice the air of *Stradella* and a psalm from *Marcello*. . . . "Again, sing again!" murmured Chopin. All present, knelt round the room, sobbing and deeply affected, while the wondrous voice went on singing, cradling the dying artist on waves of harmony. . . . "Evening was closing

in, and Chopin's sister, lying prostrate by the bedside, remained in the same attitude till all was over."¹

On 4th April, 1814, on the entry of the Allies into Paris, the platform of the Column on which Napoleon



Statue of Napoleon I. surmounting the *Colonne Vendôme*

stood was invaded by a party of political fanatics armed with files, who tried to cut through the base of the statue, while others, amongst them the Marquis de Maubreuil, had fastened ropes to the figure and harnessed their horses to them. These violent attempts, however, were stopped by the authorities, and four days later the statue was lowered quietly and methodically to the ground,—an operation which cost 3,600 francs. As for the Emperor's effigy, it was thrown into the melting-pot, whence emerged in due course the statue of Henri IV. now standing in the *Pont-Neuf*. During the Restoration period, the white flag floated above an empty pedestal.

On 28th July, 1833, Napoleon I., in cocked hat and *redingote*, was once more hoisted into the place of honour atop of the Column. But in 1865, Napoleon III., who previously to being elected President of the Republic had resided in the *Place Vendôme* at the Hôtel du Rhin (Nos. 4 and 6), deposed his Uncle's statue once more, and

¹ *Chopin*, by F. Liszt.

bartered it for a new figure representing him as a Roman Emperor. The story goes that the old soldiers, survivors of the great Wars, who used to come every 5th of May in pious memory of past glories, to lay their garlands at the foot of the famous Column, could not recognise their Emperor any more thus travestied, and spoke of the new figure in its flowing robes by the irreverent nickname of "the laundryman".

Finally, on 16th May, 1871, by order of the Commune of Paris and under the surveillance of the painter G. Courbet, delegate for the *Beaux-Arts*, the Column, artfully weakened at its base by a diagonal cut, was brought down with the help of ropes and pulleys. The 252,000 kilogrammes (250 tons) of bronze comprising it crashed down into the *Place* with a terrific clatter that terrified the inhabitants of the district, who for several days had had all their window-panes criss-crossed with strips of paper to save them from being broken by the concussion. Bergeret ("himself") pronounced a discourse perched on the mutilated pedestal, and the *Père Duchêne* of next day spoke feelingly of the "noble procession of patriots round the *Place Vendôme*, and his huge delight at seeing the cursed tyrant Badinguet I. flat on the ground, and how he had got a bit for himself!" In 1876 the Column was re-erected by order of M. Thiers, then President of the Republic, at the expense of the *Citoyen* Courbet!

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In our own days the *Place Vendôme* has regained all its old brilliance . . . but its *clientèle* is singularly modified. No longer is it the great Nobles and rich Financiers who live there; Staff Officers no longer prance across it, and the humble astronomer who down to 1880 used to



Ruins of the *Colonne Vendôme*, May, 1871

exhibit for two sous "the mountains of the Moon and Saturn's ring" has packed up his telescope and gone. Modern industrialism has taken possession; luxurious hotels, fashionable dressmakers, dealers in costly bric-à-brac, Insurance companies, *modistes*, a swell bootmaker . . . flaunt their shop-signs along its walls.

About five o'clock a cosmopolitan crowd of elegantly attired dames come there to refresh themselves with a cup of tea after their fatigues in ransacking the artistic and costly treasures of the jewellers in the *Rue de la Paix*. The rendezvous is Ritz's, where you will hear scandal and frocks discussed in all the languages of the civilised world. They all meet there, wealthy Americans, blue-blooded Englishwomen, lisping Russians, flaxen-haired Swedes, not to mention the sylph-like beauties of Vienna and dark-skinned Señoras from Chili! . . . The latest news from Smyrna is discussed, and the society gossip of Caraccas; "Fifth Avenue" is voted vulgar, and Constantinople abused for its dulness. Outside, in the old *Place Louis XIV.*, the horses stamp, motor cars snort and jangle, and footmen yawn, while from his lofty pedestal of bronze Napoleon the Great gazes down at this twentieth-century invasion of the fair ladies of all lands, who with smiling lips and laughing eyes seem to be trying *their* hand at the conquest of the ever-desirable City of Paris.

THE PLACE DE LA CONCORDE

SMALL causes, as we know, often produce great effects, and it is really amazing to consider what a transformation the sickness with which Louis XV. was attacked at Metz produced in Paris! To begin with, the King, in fulfilment of a vow then made, began the construction of the Panthéon, the imposing mass of which modified the familiar skyline of the old city. Then the Provosts of the Merchants and the *Échevins* of Paris voted an equestrian statue to their well-beloved Sovereign. The latter accepted the offering and signified the spot where the monument was to be erected, "between the moat at the extremity of our Garden of the Tuileries and the Quay which borders the river".

Most people thought the Monarch had selected a singularly inappropriate site. In fact the place was a stretch of open ground where market-gardeners grew their cabbages and lettuces; it was surrounded by stone-faced moats where "idle fellows resorted to play bowls." However it was no use disputing the Royal pleasure. Bouchardon was chosen to execute the monument. "The King, crowned with laurels and arrayed in Roman costume, sat a prancing charger of bronze;" round the pedestal, which was of white marble adorned with bas-

reliefs in celebration of the Monarch's exploits, were four figures of the Virtues, gazing in ecstasy at their exponent. Bouchardon spent over fourteen years on this costly and elaborate *ex-voto*, but died before even beginning the pedestal. Pigalle completed the masterpiece, which was unveiled on 2nd June, 1765. But alas! Louis XV. had lost his popularity long ago now, and the Parisians were convulsed with mocking laughter when next day they read this couplet scribbled on the base by some anonymous wit:—

Ah ! la belle statue ! oh ! le beau piédestal !
Les Vertus sont à pied et le Vice à cheval !¹

Epigrams apart, the monument formed a fine central ornament to the noble *Place* which the architect Gabriel was laying out according to the uniform and admirable plan he had traced out. This included parterres of flowers, dry moats enclosed with stone balustrades, ornamental pavilions, and to complete the whole superb design, the two magnificent blocks of building on the North side of the Square, the incomparable façade of which is one of the glories of Paris,—the present Ministry of Marine and the *Hôtel Crillon* with the contiguous Automobile Club and the *Cercle de l'Union*.

These finely conceived designs were still only half finished on 30th May, 1770, the date of an appalling catastrophe which proved fatal to the growing popularity of the future Queen Marie Antoinette. Paris was holding a fête in honour of the Dauphin's marriage with the daughter of Maria Theresa; there was a display of fireworks, and just as this was concluding, an erratic rocket

¹ "Ah ! what a fine statue, what a noble pedestal ! The Virtues are afoot while Vice rides cock-a-horse !"



Place de la Concorde

caused an outbreak of fire. . . . A wild panic ensues, shouts and screams rend the air, and a frantic rush is made for the exits. On the South side, towards the Seine, many fell into the river,—there was no bridge there then, only a ferry to connect the two banks of the stream. The majority, however, tried to escape northwards by the *Rue Royale*; but this too was hampered and obstructed by building material,—the ground cut up with trenches, these and great blocks of ashlar making it difficult, if not impossible, to pass along it. Yet this was the route chosen by the yelling crowd, which swept along “with the impetuosity of a torrent”. The crush was frightful; and the living trampled the dead and dying underfoot. There was actual bloodshed too, for some wretches even drew their swords to cut themselves a passage through the struggling mass of humanity. The ground was strewn with the mangled corpses of men, women and children, for the horses, no less terrified than their masters, threw down and kicked and trampled all who came near them, only to meet the same fate themselves presently. Next day a hundred and thirty-three dead bodies were lifted from the ground or drawn out of Gabriel's eight moats, and laid in rows in the *Place*, while over three hundred more died of their injuries.

To banish these melancholy recollections, the city authorities installed in the *Place Louis XV.* the mountebanks and ballad-mongers and tight-rope dancers whom the conflagration of the Fair of St. Ovide had driven away from the *Place Vendôme*, their usual haunt; and merri-ment was again the order of the day till, on the evening of 23rd September, 1777, another fire consumed all these booths, flimsily constructed of canvas and planks of wood.

It was indeed on this occasion that Nicolet and Audinot, whose theatres were in high feather on the Boulevard du Temple, conceived the happy thought of "giving a performance in aid of the sufferers from the fire". This touching mark of fellow-feeling among *artistes* was welcomed with acclamation . . . and here was laid the foundation of all future "benefits" !

Between 1762 and 1770 Gabriel finally completed the two ranges of building whose imposing façades bound the Square on the North. The *Garde-Meuble de la Couronne* formerly occupied the whole of the right-hand portion. On the other side were the *Hôtels de Coislin, de Daumont and de Crillon*, where the representatives of those noble families lived. Soon the *Place Louis XV.* became the resort of all the fashionables and would-be fashionables of Paris, the place where great lords and rich "Farmers General," Duchesses and Opéra dancers, were to be seen riding or driving to and fro. One day the renowned Mlle. Duthé eclipsed all the beauties of the day ; the "*Nouvelles à la Main*" give us this surprising description of her coach and her costume :—"It was a carriage-body decorated with Cupids amid interlacing wreaths and flourishes, etc., surmounted by a gilt shell, lined with mother-of-pearl inside, and supported by bronze tritons ; the naves of the wheels were of solid silver ; the white horses were shod with silver, while the harness was plated with gold and adorned with waving plumes. On this shell reclined Mlle. Duthé, in flesh-coloured silk tights and over them a chemisette of very transparent book-muslin, on her head a hat of black gauze all brim and no crown."

Everybody was scandalised, and next day the madcap creature received orders not to display her venal charms

in such an outrageous guise. For a week, however, nothing was talked of but her escapade and her fairylike equipage!

On one occasion the *Place Louis XV.*, after witnessing so many embassies, reviews, processions and Royal progresses, became the scene of a deer hunt. On a summer's evening in 1788, a fawn, put up in the Bois de Boulogne by the Comte d'Artois' pack, leapt the fences, took the road to Paris, sped down the Champs-Élysées, and followed by hounds and huntsmen, the prickers sounding their horns and the *calèches* of the ladies invited to the chase galloping after, turned at bay in the *Rue Royale*; there it was killed, the pitying spectators having vainly begged the poor beast's life. . . . How many of these same sportsmen were to meet *their* fate five years later within a few score yards of the spot where they cut the unhappy, terrified animal's throat!¹

The Revolution breaks out, and the *Place Louis XV.* becomes the stage where many of the most thrilling scenes of that prodigious tragedy are enacted!

¹ "One fine summer's day I was going home to my apartments in the *Garde-Meuble de la Couronne*. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and the *Rue Royale* was full of people and crowded with horses and carriages. When I came to accost my sister, I found she was in tears. I had not a notion what it all meant till she informed me that the cause of all this throng and excitement and weeping was the death of a fawn, which, hunted through the Bois de Boulogne by the Comte d'Artois, had leapt the enclosing fences, struck into the Paris road, sped down the Champs-Élysées, and followed by the whole pack, the sportsmen and the *calèches* of the ladies attending the chase, had finally turned at bay in the *Rue Royale*. A curious sight truly,—a Royal hunt in the finest street in Paris, but so touching as to have stirred the most lively feelings of sensibility and compassion on the part of my sister and many other ladies who from their windows had vainly begged mercy for the poor beast."—*Mémoires du Général Baron Thiébault*, vol. i., p. 207.

It swarms with Sectionaries and pikemen, the Duthé's wonderful coach is replaced by the Car of the Goddess of Reason, personated by Mlle. Maillard, of the Opéra, or Mlle. Aménaïde, "a tragic actress of bourgeois antecedents," a goodnatured young woman whose free and easy dress and bearing contrasted rather oddly with the majesty of her rôle. Not unnaturally objections were raised to the protracted halts for refreshment which she indulged in whenever the Car bearing the Divinity came to a stop, and to the familiar and fraternal fashion in which she shared her provision of wine and beer and cracknels with "Tyranny" and "Fanaticism," who after accepting these good things from their triumphant enemy, duly and submissively resumed their chains at her all-conquering feet.

On 21st January, 1793, the guillotine was set up for the first time in the *Place*, and it was between the ruins of the statue of Louis XV. and the entrance to the Champs-Élysées that the head of Louis XVI. fell. The terms of the letter are well-known in which Sanson, the executioner, recounted the circumstances of the Monarch's last moments and death to the editor of *Le Thermomètre*, a newspaper of that time: ". . . He asked if the drum would go on beating all the time. He was told we had no information on the point, and this was the truth. He mounted the scaffold and was for pushing to the front as if to address the crowd. But it was pointed out to him that this was still impossible. He let himself be led to the spot where his hands were tied, and where he cried out very loud: 'People, I die innocent'. Next, turning to us, he said: 'Gentlemen, I am innocent of everything laid to my charge; I wish my blood may cement the happiness of



Execution of Louis XVI

the French'. These, *Citoyen*, were his last and veritable words."

The guillotine stood between the Statue of Liberty,—erected on the site of that of Louis XV.,—and the approach to the *Pont Tournant*, or Swing Bridge giving access to the Tuileries Gardens.



Danton

The scaffold, surrounded by a double line of gendarmes, was raised several steps above the level of the *Place*, which was almost always crowded. Some days the crush was tremendous to see the more famous heads fall. Many



The Terraces of the Tuileries and the *Pont Tournant* about 1788

stood on carts or clambered up ladders ; amateurs of strong emotions used to hire glasses, or bring them with them, to enable them to enjoy the last grimace of the unhappy creatures who "sneezed into the bran." As a rule it was a silent crowd, and the last cry of the victims could be plainly heard or the dull thud of the knife as it descended on the neck. Then rose a hurricane of howls and shouts, oaths and cheers, and one of the headsman's assistants, by command of the populace, would hold out the severed head at arm's length from the four corners of the gruesome platform. Curious spectators would gather on the Terraces of the Tuileries or, bent on securing a better view, would climb on to the colossal figures of Fame which stood on either side of the Western entrance to the Gardens. There was keen competition for the lodges of the Swiss who acted as Gatekeepers, the narrow windows of these overlooking the scaffold at not many yards' distance. The rooms were engaged beforehand at heavy prices ; supper parties were held there, and the place came to be known popularly as the "*cabaret de la guillotine*,"—"At the sign of the Guillotine".

Danton's death had a touch of epic grandeur. Night was already falling ; he was the last to mount the scaffold reeking and red with the blood of all his friends who had been executed before him. His athletic figure stood out in its full height against the gold and purple of the setting sun ; throwing back his lionlike head, he gazed long at the vast *Place*, as though defying the headsman's knife. Under the darkening sky the indomitable Revolutionary seemed rather to be rising from the tomb than awaiting the fatal blow that was to sever head and trunk, and a shudder of awe ran through the excited crowd.

Robespierre's end was horrible in the extreme. Amid the howls and insults and execrations of a whole city, the man before whom all cowered and trembled twenty-four hours before, was dragged, more dead than alive, covered with mud, his clothes in tatters, his head swathed in blood-stained rags, to the foot of the scaffold for which he had been the most odiously successful in providing victims. Before pushing him under the knife, the executioner tore away the bandage which supported his shattered jaw, and Robespierre in the agony of this last torment uttered such a roar of pain that the whole immense Square trembled to hear it. . . .

The Terror overpast, peace and reconciliation is the dream of the moment ; the scaffold is torn down, the Statue of Liberty restored,—and, propitious omen! a nest of young doves is found by a happy chance in the globe the figure held in her hand. From 1795 the *Place de la Révolution* is known as the *Place de la Concorde*.

There Napoleon reviews his triumphant armies returned from some amazing campaign in Germany, Austria, Spain or Russia. There Louis XVIII. displays the semblance, if not the reality, of kingly Majesty, as he dashes full gallop across the Square.

But the centre of the *Place* called for some monument to complete its noble proportions. Louis-Philippe conceived the conciliatory idea, one that struck the "happy mean" between all extremes,—to erect the obelisk there, the entire meaninglessness of which disarms the criticism of every party. Thenceforth this homesick exile,—does not Théophile Gautier say it is homesick?—could murmur sadly :—

" Je vois de Janvier à Décembre
La procession des Bourgeois,

Les Solon qui vont à la Chambre !
Et les Arthur qui vont au Bois." ¹

The moats were filled up in 1844 in consequence of a panic which occurred at the time of the fêtes in commemoration of the July Revolution, and which almost exactly reproduced the circumstances of the catastrophe which cast a gloom over the wedding festivities of Marie Antoinette,—a display of fireworks in front of the Chamber, a terrible collision between two sections of the crowd surging in opposite directions, men and women crushed to death or forced into the moats, the ground left strewn with wounded and dead. . . . Henceforth there is no danger, and Balzac's fascinating heroines, the *Duchesses de Cadignan* or *de Maufrigneuse*, the *Jenny Cadines*, the *Tullies* and the *Esthers*, can throne it in their carriages without the smallest risk; anon the beauties of the Second Empire will in their turn drive their C-springs in the memorable Square, with all Paris gazing in admiration at the perfect grace of the Empress, and the beauty of Mmes. de Gallifet, de Pourtalès, de Rothschild, de Sagan, de Poilly, de Mouchy,—

" Reines de l'Élégance et Princesses du geste." ²

Some months ago now notices were posted on the pillars forming the angle of the *Place de la Concorde* and the *Rue Boissy d'Anglas*,—formerly called the *Rue de la Bonne-Morue*, an ugly name for a street sheltering the elegant *Cercle de l'Union Artistique* which has its quarters

¹ " From January to December I look on at the endless procession of bourgeois,—the Solons who make our laws on their way to the Chamber, and the dandies on their way to the Bois."—Th. Gautier, *Émaux et Camées*,—Nostalgie d'Obélisque.

² " Queens of Elegance and Princesses of graceful motion."

in the charming mansion once belonging to Grimod de la Reynière,—advertising the sale of the *Hôtel Crillon*. With his usual kindness, the amiable Comte J. de Gontaut-Biron, one of the owners of this fine building, was good enough to take us through the rooms with him. We were never weary of admiring the charming boudoirs, and smaller rooms with carved chimney-pieces by Gouthière, the great salon with its coats of arms and heraldic eagles, and above all the unrivalled view over the finest Square in the world, where order and magnificence, harmony and beauty reign supreme!

With such a view before one's eyes, how help thinking of the strange Providence that has decreed this beautiful spot to be the majestic stage whither all the French Monarchies have come to find their apotheosis and to perish?

Louis XVI. was beheaded there; there the Allies in 1814 celebrated the *Te Deum* that greeted the fall of the Cæsar who had been so long and gloriously triumphant; Charles X.—on horseback—crossed it on his way to Rambouillet, and exile; it was there Louis-Philippe hired the humble *fiacre* which in 1848 was the funeral-car of defunct Monarchy; finally on the 4th September, 1870, it was through the Gates of the adjoining Gardens, forced in by the pressure of an indignant populace, that the Tuileries were invaded for the last time by the Parisian mob, before finally going up in whirlwinds of fire and smoke during the last convulsions of the expiring Commune!

Lastly it was in the *Place de la Concorde*, that on 6th January, 1883, before the black-draped figure of the City of Strasbourg, was borne past in a triumphal car designed by Bastien-Lepage and shrouded in the tricolour, the coffin containing the body of Léon Gambetta, the last

elected deputy of Alsace, the patriot who had the signal honour,—the most enviable of all,—of bearing aloft in the hour of her calamity the flag of his suffering Country!

What associations, what memories, cling about the spot! . . . Now, as of old, the *Place de la Concorde* is still the frame wherein our Parisiennes best love to display their finest equipages, their most exquisite toilettes and their most heavenly smile! Everywhere we behold change and modification and decay; Monarchies vanish, ambitions and hostile passions sink into oblivion, war-songs fall silent, dreams fade away; the only things that remain eternally, defying time and forgetfulness, ever radiant and ever victorious, are two,—the charm of Paris and the grace of her daughters!

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